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REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE GORBACHEV RECORD

REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

BY THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

MAY 1988

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

The Commission report, in the pages that follow, is based on the Commission's continuing, professional contacts with a wide range of experts on Soviet affairs in this country and abroad. It is a sober, factual survey of Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts during his first three years as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party to promote significant reforms in the politics, economy and society of his country.

As an afterword to the Commission report, we publish a commentary by Dr. Yuri Orlov, who founded the first Soviet Helsinki Watch group in Moscow in May 1976, and who was imprisoned from March 1977 to October 1986 as punishment for his courageous efforts to monitor and encourage Soviet compliance with the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. His commentary — "The Meaning of Gorbachev's Reforms" — provides a critical analysis of the motives of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

While we do not necessarily concur with all of Dr. Orlov's observations, he makes one point with which we completely agree:

> [T]he most constructive thing to do during this period of change in the Soviet Union is not, as some in the West think, simply to sit back and encouragingly applaud Gorbachev's words and reforms. The applause needs to be combined with pressure on the Soviet leader to back their liberal words with more action and to expand their reforms in accordance with international human rights agreements they themselves have signed.

This Commission report is designed to contribute to that consistent pressure, for in describing how much has changed or seems to be in the process of changing, it also documents how many fundamental rights of Soviet citizens to freedom of expression, of belief, of movement and of national character remain restricted and unprotected.

There has been much to applaud in the three years of Gorbachev's rule, especially compared to the repressive actions of his predecessors. The release of many political prisoners from camps and psychiatric prison-hospitals, the rise in the numbers of Soviet citizens permitted to emigrate and to travel, the increasing candor of the official Soviet press and the increasing tolerance shown to unofficial groups and unorthodox points of view are all welcome first steps in the right direction.

They are, however, no more than first steps. And as our report documents, they were taken slowly and could be retracted almost overnight. Until the rule of law establishes a decent balance between the power of the Soviet state and the human dignity of individual Soviet citizens, the latter will always be at risk.

Risk-taking has seemed to be very much the Gorbachev style in internal and external affairs. It is also the departure from the past he has most fervently pressed his subjects — as workers, managers, bureaucrats and engaged citizens — to embrace. But millions of them have shown, largely by acts of omission, by their passivity and indifference, that they fear to follow where he seeks to lead.

Gorbachev has taken risks in his foreign policy: in reversing long-standing positions on arms control and on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — issues the report does not address. At home he has taken the risk — and sometimes gotten ahead of his support at various levels of the party — of promoting a measure of competition in elections to party and local government posts, in allocation of economic resources and in the conduct of civic discourse in the media and the world of culture.

He sets an example that only the brave or the frustrated seem eager to emulate. Indeed, the mediocre performers, those threatened by competition in all walks of life, could constitute the largest group in society made uncomfortable by reform and likely to resist it. Workers, with reason, fear that their secure jobs will be casualties of his economic reforms. Managers fear failure in trying to implement new techniques. Bureaucrats and party officials fear loss of authority and perquisites. Editors, writers, artists and ordinary citizens fear that today's tolerance of freer expression will turn tomorrow, if Gorbachev fails, to penalties for those whose views and experiments win acclaim today.

Soviets, as they long have, fear going too far, too fast. Veteran *Izvestiya* commentator Alexander Bovin said as much last November and traced the roots of the psychosis to the total disregard for law of the still-vivid Stalinist past. "The most terrible thing Stalin succeeded in achieving was to frighten people. . .. People were terrorized, and this feeling is still alive today," he wrote. "Only legal guarantees," he continued can establish "what we want — a constitutional state."

His is an old refrain in his nation's history. It was heard in 1825 on the squares of St. Petersburg where the Decembrists confronted the supporters of a new autocrat. It was heard in the debates after that Czar's death in 1855 brought a reform monarch to the throne. And it was voiced by Russia's last articulate civil society in pre-revolution appeal after fruitless appeal to Nicholas II.

If Mikhail Gorbachev cannot answer that cry to secure the liberty he says his people need to rebuild their society, their economy, their initiative and their self-confidence, he will be just another Russian reformer, remembered more for his proclaimed intentions than his achievements. Because we are certain that his innovations cannot take root without a foundation of assured justice, we have titled this report on the Gorbachev record, "Reform and Human Rights."

The two must go together. After three years of Gorbachev's rule, however, that essential connection has yet to be made and maintained.

Western pressure can help to a degree in cementing respect for human rights to the progress of *perestroika*. Our Commission exists to promote that pressure and to assist in its wise and effective ap-

plication, not just in dealings with the Soviet Union, but with all the Participating States of the 1975 Helsinki Accords.

The following joint, bipartisan congressional report is the Commission's latest addition to the documentation it has long provided in support of international pressure for full implementation of the Accord's principles and its signatories' undertakings. We hope that you will agree that the result is an objective record of Mikhail Gorbachev's first three years in power, the record, as Yuri Orlov says, of the "several positive changes" Gorbachev has advanced, and of the "important things that have not changed."

Sincerely,

STENY H. HOYER, *Chairman*
DENNIS DECONCINI, *Co-Chairman*
DON RITTER, *Ranking House Minority Member*
ALFONSE D'AMATO, *Ranking Senate Minority Member*

REFORM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Gorbachev Record

Report of the

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

WITH AN AFTERWORD BY YURI F. ORLOV

Washington, D.C., May 1988

REFORMING FROM ABOVE

Having proclaimed the urgent need to revitalize and restructure the society and economy of the U.S.S.R., Mikhail Gorbachev has set himself, the Communist Party and the people of the Soviet Union an ambitious agenda of reforms. In politics and economics, proclamation has far outdistanced progress.

Resistance to change is one force that has kept its pace slow and even forced more than one tactical shift in course. Both economic reality and Soviet history — not just the stagnation of the Brezhnev years, but also the centuries-old immobility and indifference of ordinary people to their leaders — have acted as added brakes on rapid transformation. And Gorbachev's determination to preserve central control while simultaneously trying to diffuse power, builds a deep, if unavoidable, contradiction into the process he calls "revolutionary."

Still, in his first three years, he has achieved a large measure of generational change in the top party leadership and created significant expectations of more innovations to come. In the absence of either catastrophe or the emergence of a viable alternative candidate for the post of General Secretary, he appears to have time and space to continue his campaign to reform the Soviet Union from the top.

The drive has produced more debates than results in the political sphere, debates about:

- — multip'e-candidate, secret ballot elections to party posts;
- — the privileges and perquisites of high party office;
- — competition for elected local government jobs and for managerial positions in the workplace.

On the field of economic reform, the Gorbachev campaign started with exhortations to workers to show greater discipline and enthusiasm and, as a preventive measure, sharp restrictions on the sale of alcohol. More concretely, he has obtained:

- — consolidation of the bureaucracies overseeing five key sections of production and trade;
- — widened freedom for farmers to sell their output to private purchasers;
- — self-financing for light industry, shifting some of the incentives in consumer goods output from state orders to market demand;
- — partial legalization of the private, underground, goods and service sector; and
- — sweeping, party-approved guidelines for profound realignment in the system of central economic planning and control with vast potential consequences for job security and producer efficiency.

Those guidelines most clearly and most controversially define the direction of Gorbachev's economic reforms. As much as what they contain — creation of new wholesale markets in which enterprises will have to compete for their supplies; new freedom for managers to decide what to produce, how to price it and whom (at what salary) to employ — they are important for the issues they do not confront: state pricing subsidies and transition mechanisms to the newly but only partially decentralized economic system.

The guidelines set not only ambitious targets for change but a rapid schedule for accomplishing it. They promise to introduce something Soviet workers and managers have never faced: uncertainty. And they guarantee no swift rise in living standards.

Imposed from the top, the reforms are far too untested for outsiders to be able to judge their acceptance at the working level. Soviets themselves are skeptical of the new world into which Gorbachev's restructuring is pushing them. Westerners watching his campaign can only acknowledge its ambitious scope and reserve judgment on its prospects of success.

DEMOCRATIZATION SOVIET STYLE

Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of reform has steadily widened from a focus on economic restructuring, premised on public involvement (*glasnost*), to a call for democratization as his first priority.[1] It is his prescription for revitalizing a sense of kinship between state and society, for overcoming widespread societal indifference to government, born of the party leadership's monopolization of policymaking. His twin hope is to convince people that they can shape their own future and the country's and to mobilize popular enthusiasm for the task.

Democratization has narrower political aims as well. Like *glasnost*, it can serve Gorbachev and his allies as a means of purging uncooperative party leaders and officials. Particularly when economic reforms may heighten income disparities and may even lower the standard of living, public participation in decision making can help deflect popular discontent with austerity measures. *Democratizatsia*, in any case, cannot be mistaken in either its present or projected forms for Western-style democracy, and Soviet leaders have taken pains to emphasize that the Communist Party intends to remain the final, uncontested arbiter of national policy.

Still, Gorbachev's public statements acknowledge that the party can no longer rule the Soviet Union without some sort of public input. He presents democratization, which he has occasionally called "Socialist pluralism," as essential for *perestroika* and promises to apply it to all spheres of Soviet life. Specifically, he has called for the people to help in overseeing the bureaucracy's performance; for electoral reform in party and state administrative organs and in economic enterprises; for activating local elected bodies, the Soviets; and for permitting a wide range of organized civic activism.

Glasnost

Describing the state of affairs before his accession, Gorbachev complained, "More often than not, the principles of equality among party members were violated. Many party members in leading posts stood beyond control and criticism."[2] *Glasnost* is one of his corrective devices.

Exposés of official misdeeds ranging from half-hearted support of *perestroika* to full disregard of societal needs and to the most blatant corruption have become common in the Soviet media. This democratization of access to information is a radical break with past practices of restricting such access to the ruling elite. *Glasnost* also serves two direct political purposes: it strengthens directives from above with "control from below" to monitor and pressure officials and to let people feel that traditionally arbitrary bureaucrats are accountable to them. Moreover, publicizing the inadequacies and

dismissals of party bigwigs offers the population some sense that the powerful are not immune.

Electoral Reform

As a complement to *glasnost*, Gorbachev has sought electoral reform both inside the party and in other policy-making bodies. His success, however, has been limited.

At the January 1987 party plenum, he proposed multiple candidate, secret ballot elections for party secretaries as high as the republic level. "Of course," he added, "the principle of the party rules, under which the decisions of higher bodies are compulsory for all lower party committees, including those on personnel matters, should remain unshakeable in the party." [3] Even with this concession to orthodoxy, his idea was apparently too radical a threat to the rigid *nomenklatura* system and the tenure it guarantees to ranking officials. The Central Committee Plenum's resolution made no mention of multiple candidates in party elections.

PARTY PERFORMANCE: Since then, the party's record on this score has been spotty. Some multiple-candidate elections have taken place, as in the Izhmorsky Rayon of Western Siberia in February 1987.[4] But the practice has failed to sink roots, and where it has been tried, it appears to have been limited to lower level posts. Ukrainian Party chief Vladimir Shcherbitsky, for instance, announced that in elections held during 1987, 42% of party organization secretaries in his republic had won their positions by defeating several other contenders. But he conceded that only 39 secretaries on the city and district (rayon) levels were elected by secret ballot from among two or three candidates.[5]

Gorbachev's proposals of multiple-candidate party elections, though very inconsistently carried out, have at least not been shelved. In January 1988, Nikolai Shishlin, deputy head of the Propaganda Department, suggested applying this principle even on the Central Committee level, adding that no party post should be held for life. On February 14, *Pravda* carried a page-one article by Ukrainian Party members urging multiple-candidate elections for party committee first secretaries of all ranks. They advocated that, beginning at the district level and eventually extending upward, all party members be allowed to vote for the nominees on secret ballots.

The issue of broadening intra-party democracy is also high on the agenda of the party conference planned for June 1988, and its prominence indicates the reformers' awareness that a democratic restructuring launched from the top cannot exclude the top. Introducing elections where appointment has always been the norm would be a major innovation, one that the regime seems so far unready to try.

PRIVILEGES OF RANK: One indicator of how much resistance there is to democratizing the party is the controversy over privileges accorded CPSU members. In February 1986, *Pravda* printed letters complaining about such perks as access to special stores, to high quality medical care and to special resorts. At the 27th Party Congress, Boris Yeltsin suggested that unworthy party members be stripped of these privileges. His remarks drew a heated response

from Politburo member Yegor Ligachev, who also obliquely criticized *Pravda* for having even mentioned this taboo topic.[6]

One recent democratizing measure concerns high-level party members' right-of-way on Moscow streets. The deputy chief of Moscow's traffic control service announced in January 1988, that 800 officials would lose the special lights and sirens their chauffeur-driven vehicles use to clear a path through thoroughfares, often leaving traffic jams in their wake.[7]

LOCAL ELECTIONS: To keep the party from encroaching on the prerogatives of other institutions — a practice Gorbachev has criticized as stifling initiative and efficiency — he has tried to energize local Soviets, i.e. administrative governmental organs. At the 27th Party Congress, for instance, he encouraged the Soviets to "undertake responsibility for all aspects of life on their territory." Such functions include housing and education, public health and consumer goods, trade and services and the protection of nature. Gorbachev warned against excessive centralization and urged "promoting the autonomy and activity of local government bodies." [8]

The ensuing two years have brought few positive results. In January 1988, Gorbachev lamented: "What is the use of talking, comrades, if in many cases party bodies took on many of [the Soviets'] functions?" He concluded that "new approaches" would be needed to make better use of the Soviets' potential.[9]

One such approach is electoral reform. In mid-1987, 162 of the country's approximately 3,800 districts experimented with elections of Soviets on a multiple-candidate basis. Reports indicated that in some places the media and party organs had to convince Soviets and voters to take the experiment seriously. Still, the results have been sufficiently encouraging to warrant drafting a new statute on Soviet elections.[10] More recently, an unprecedented contested election took place for the post of Deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet.[11]

Electing deputies to Soviets on a multi-candidate basis is far less ticklish an experiment than extending this practice to the party itself. Since the Soviets have enjoyed little real power or influence, their electoral reforms are not very significant. One indication of the careful approach to democratization is Gorbachev's statement at the 27th Party Congress: "The Party will continue to see to it that deputies are elected from among the worthiest people. . .and that the composition of the Soviets is systematically renewed." [12] Even with liberalized nominating and electoral procedures, in other words, the party will still have the final word.

WORKERS AND BOSSES: At the January 1987 Central Committee Plenum, Gorbachev called for electing directors of industrial and agricultural enterprises, along with their department heads, production team leaders and foremen. The Law on State Enterprises, adopted in June 1987, incorporated this suggestion by mandating elections of all managerial personnel in enterprises nationwide. Furthermore, the law created a new institution, the Labor Collective Council, whose members are to be elected for two-to-three year terms by secret or open ballot.

Though these provisions seem to authorize workers' participation in management, their influence is actually quite restricted. The prime responsibility of the Labor Collective Council, for example, is

to promote productivity and monitor worker performance. And while workers can vote for enterprise directors, the bureaucracy overseeing the enterprise must approve any choice. The director, in turn, must approve all lower level managerial personnel elected by workers.[13]

Legislation of February 1988 is supposed to expand the collective's powers. *Izvestiya* reported that "decisions by the labor collective are now mandatory not only for members of the collective and the administration, but also for higher-ranking state and economic organs. . . . But . . . the collective is not always right—it is right when the law is on its side." [14] It remains to be seen, therefore, what these new powers will actually mean to workplace democracy.

Despite these built-in limitations, and even though there have been more elections in enterprises than in Soviets or the party, grass roots democratization is growing slowly at best. A January 8, 1988 article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* noted that "Alarm signals about disdainful attitudes to workers' opinions and critical appeals are received from many enterprises. . . ." And workers, not just managerial personnel are finding it hard to alter established methods of operation overnight. "Even the labor collective councils often meet not to consult but just to listen to edifying words and instructions from the managers who lead them." The author concluded that "The support and trusteeship of local party committees are clearly very important here."

While party organizations are supposed to urge managers and workers towards greater independence and democratic practices, the presumed agent of democratization, the party, has resisted setting an example. The Komsomol (Young Communist League) also has been slow to democratize itself. In January 1988, its newspaper published complaints about the failure to implement proposals adopted at the 20th Komsomol Congress in April 1987, for secret ballot, multi-candidate elections for district and provincial secretaries: "But it is no secret that electoral practice remains unchanged in many places—that is, just one candidate, a show of hands, and all this under the watchful eye of the Presidium. . .. The conclusion is bitter and simple. Initial attempts to restructure the democratic mechanism in the Komsomol have yet to produce results." [15]

Civic Activism

In striking contrast to the slow development of democracy in the party, the Soviets and the workplace, some elements of Soviet society have jumped at the chance to display greater initiative. Indeed, one of the most remarkable developments of the Gorbachev era has been the mushrooming of unofficial, i.e. not party-controlled, groups. Their interests and programs run an extremely wide gamut, with correspondingly varying degrees and types of political content, but the divide between political and non political-activity is murky.

Rock music, for example, is a very sensitive issue, given its unavoidable association with Western culture and its appeal to many Soviet young people. Moreover, the very appearance of organizations outside authorized channels is a political statement, evidence

of dissatisfaction with established mechanisms of self-expression. The head of the Komsomol, which has received much criticism for being formalistic and doctrinaire, recently revealed that the organization's membership has dropped by nearly 4 million since 1985, and the number of 14- and 15-year olds joining has fallen by a fourth.[16]

Soviet youngsters and adults seem to be turning away from party-sponsored groups and to clubs that offer like-minded people organized forms of leisure—music, dance, sports and the like—to groups that press environmental concerns or the preservation of historical monuments and to openly political, civic action associations. It is the groups which take Gorbachev's call for *glasnost* and democratization seriously and whose ideas, if implemented, would lead to fundamental systemic change that pose the greatest immediate difficulties for the authorities. The rise to notoriety of the *Pamyat* (Memory) Society demonstrates that allowing public opinion to organize and express itself can bring challenges from the conservative-reactionary end of the political spectrum as well as from the liberal-left reformist camp.

The spontaneous emergence of a range of informal groups appears to have caught the authorities by surprise. A special party commission reportedly is now examining this phenomenon, but neither explicit guidelines nor laws demarcating the borders of acceptable activity have yet been issued. Consequently, both the party and the groups have been in uncharted waters.

For most of 1987, the authorities took a relatively restrained line, revealing their stance towards unofficial clubs more by actions than statements. Though speeches during the summer by Politburo members Yegor Ligachev and KGB head Viktor Chebrikov indicated concern about liberalizing trends, the Moscow Party organization provided a hall in August for a conference of 47 left-wing reformers' groups. And after *Pamyat* members marched through central Moscow in May, party chief Boris Yeltsin received a delegation of their representatives. On October 8, *Novosti* press agency helped members of four political groups to arrange a news conference for Soviet and Western journalists. Among other things, they discussed forming competing political parties and demanded the right to field candidates in local elections.[17]

REVERSING COURSE: In the fall of last year, however, especially after Yeltsin quit his post under attack, Soviet activists and Western observers detected mounting pressures to reassert the dominance of party organizations. The Komsomol, according to one report, drafted a proposal for exerting control over unofficial clubs. The document expressed concern about the spread of the groups among graduate and undergraduate students, and concluded: "There is no need for the creation of alternative organizations." It urged that individuals with "healthy principles" be brought into the Komsomol and that "the majority of members of sociopolitical clubs [be severed] from extremist leaders."[18] Though Komsomol officials stressed the draft nature of the proposals, the 20th Komsomol Congress in April 1987, had already called for helping groups based on "sound principles" but eliminating "abnormal phenomena that are alien to the Socialist way of life."[19]

Finally, on December 27, 1987, *Pravda* addressed the question of unofficial groups. A front-page editorial offered the following yardstick for assessing initiatives from below: "Everything that benefits socialism and democracy must be supported 'from above.'" *Pravda* praised the Soviet Children's Fund named for V.I. Lenin as exemplary and opined that similarly positive activism merited material aid and a real legal foundation. But readers were warned about clubs "whose leadership includes rogues and demagogues who preach chauvinist, anti-Semitic and Zionist views" or who "openly carry out provocative work, advocate the creation of opposition parties and 'free' trade unions." Their activity "sometimes acquires a manifestly illegal character" by organizing demonstrations without consent and printing and circulating documents "hostile to socialism." Pravda called for "productive contacts between state organs, public organizations and informal associations," whose goal must be to "channel people's activeness in a positive direction. . ."

Remarkably soon afterward, *Pravda* returned to this theme, naming specific individuals as representing impermissible types of social activism. While the February 1, 1988 article blessed the rise of 30,000 groups and associations in the country, it said: "Every family has its political freaks." Prominent in this latter category, according to *Pravda*, were Dmitri Vasiliev, for turning *Pamyat* from a group devoted to preserving the country's cultural heritage into one intent on arousing anti-Semitism; *Glasnost*, edited by "convicted criminal and anti-Soviet" Sergei Grigoryants, and allied with anti-Soviet centers in the West; Seminar: Democracy and Humanism, which called for organizing demonstrations, revising the USSR's Constitution and the total deideologization of the Soviet Union and the Club of Social Initiatives. *Pravda* described the latter's organizational conference in August 1987 — though sponsored by the Moscow Party organization — as a response to Western prompting to "create a united political platform." Boris Kagarlitsky, the club's chief spokesman, was not named, but *Komsomolskaya Pravda* openly attacked him one day before.

Pravda stressed that the energies of unofficial groups should be directed "for noble aims in the interests of society." Therefore, people should not hesitate to shun those which were harmful. "For fear of appearing outmoded people from the period of stagnation, we have started for some reason to be shy about calling a spade a spade. This does not do any good. An extremist is an extremist." And "extremists" themselves were admonished by an unmistakable reference to "the power of the law."

Official response to the growth of civic activism will be a key factor in evaluating the seriousness and potential of Gorbachev's proclaimed democratization. Campaigns for electoral reform and *glasnost* which have been launched from above can more easily be controlled than the reactions they evoke. It may be much more difficult and politically damaging (both inside and outside the U.S.S.R.) if the authorities feel compelled to stem a tide they unleashed themselves and ostensibly welcomed.

The party's signals about civic activism thus far indicate a recognition that rousing people from apathetic torpor is a positive good—so long as it does not get out of hand. Under current circumstances, there appear to be three varieties of social activism: en-

couraged, tolerated and forbidden. The party reserves the exclusive right to assign groups to each category and to change the borders among these categories as it sees fit. Even without using criminal sanctions against unorthodox political activism, the party is showing that democratization has its limits . . . and the party intends to decide when they are overstepped.

Exactly what the party line is, however, remains unclear. Authoritative sources have been sending mixed signals. The latest illustration of divergent views was sparked by an article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on March 13, 1988. It warned that the overly broad range of topics aired under *glasnost* and the indiscriminately critical attitude to the country's past and present were generating nihilism among youth. The article praised the accomplishments and idealism of Stalin's era, when there were no demonstrations for the right to emigrate or informal groups based on "peasant socialism" glorifying pre-1917 Russia and "left-wing liberal intellectual humanism." Referring to Trotsky's ethnic origins, the author linked this latter camp to "cosmopolitans," i.e. Jews.

Pravda, seeing the article as a broadside against everything subsumed under *perestroika*, responded on April 5. A full-page editorial attacked *Sovetskaya Rossiya* for printing such dangerous views and blasted the article itself as "an ideological platform and manifesto for anti-*perestroika* forces." *Pravda* acknowledged Stalin's contribution to socialism but maintained that his guilt for mass repressions and lawlessness was "enormous and unforgivable." The editorial did not explicitly address the article's link between "left-wing liberals" and Jews, but it did denounce attempts to seek "a genetic reason for anti-Socialist sentiments." *Pravda* concluded by calling for "more light, more initiative, more responsibility."

Soviet and Western observers have seen this exchange as evidence of a high-level struggle between Gorbachev and Yegor Ligachev, supposedly Gorbachev's primary Politburo rival and an opponent of accelerated *glasnost* and *demokratizatsia*. According to Western press reports from Moscow, Ligachev sponsored the publication of the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* article when Gorbachev was in Yugoslavia and his Politburo ally Alexander Yakovlev was in Mongolia. Upon his return, Gorbachev took advantage of Ligachev's absence from Moscow to win the Politburo's approval for the *Pravda* editorial, large chunks of which Yakovlev wrote.[20]

Whatever the truth of these claims, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* was forced to apologize on April 15 and print the entire Pravda editorial, which stressed the need for more *glasnost* and democratization. If the newspaper exchange was a test of strength between rival party factions, the victory went to Gorbachev. The last word, however, has not been written.

FOOTNOTES

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3. *Pravda*, Jan. 28, 1987.
4. Elizabeth Teague, "Soviet Union Experiments with Electoral Reform," *RL Research*, Feb. 18, 1987.
5. *Pravda*, Jan. 26, 1988.
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12. *Political Report, op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
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14. *Izvestiya*, Feb. 19, 1988.
15. *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Jan. 13, 1988.
16. Bill Keller, "Soviet Youth League Falls on Difficult Times," *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1988.
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REBUILDING THE SOVIET ECONOMY

Although the Gorbachev reforms, going under the general heading of *perestroika*, encompass broad aims of social transformation, it is in his ideas for restructuring, renewing, revitalizing and rebuilding the Soviet economy that the General Secretary has put forward the most fully articulated program and the most demanding timetable for change. A Marxist without an operating model for his experiments, he has nonetheless concentrated on the one area where Marxist-Leninist ideology, not in his judgment alone, has produced the greatest failures.

"*Perestroika*," he wrote in his 1987 book of the same title,

> Is no whim on the part of some ambitious individuals or a group of leaders . . . (It) is an urgent necessity arising from the profound processes of development in our socialist society. This society is ripe for change. It has long been yearning for it. Any delay in starting *perestroika* could have led to an exacerbated internal situation in the near future, which, to put it bluntly, would have been fraught with serious social, economic and political crises.

Behind these words of alarm lay, for Soviets, an alarming reality. In the seventh decade after the 1917 Revolution, 40 years after the end of World War II, the centrally planned Soviet economy had a gross national product only half that of the United States. Growth rates were declining, even in industry; productivity levels were falling markedly; Soviet goods were of such poor quality that few wanted to buy them at home or abroad; the technology lag between the U.S.S.R. and the West was accelerating so fast that it threatened Soviet super power status.

As former Senator Charles Mathias has observed, Gorbachev leads a nation that is like a "crippled giant" whose sword-carrying arm is his only strong one. Although rich in raw material, the U.S.S.R. has been so wasteful of its natural and human resources that its planning and distribution weaknesses result in the effective loss of 70 percent of its annual timber output, 20-30 percent of its yearly grain harvest and some 60 percent of its fruits and vegetables. Other indicators — from the quality and availability of health services and housing to the incidence of alcoholism and infant mortality — paint the same picture of a society in decay.

Precedents for Perestroika

Gorbachev is not the first Soviet leader to acknowledge the gap between Communist promise and Soviet reality, nor the first to blame his predecessors in power for failing to narrow it swiftly enough. Lenin blamed czars and capitalists and even the bureaucracy that survived their overthrow. As Gorbachev has pushed his own program of decentralization, one of its ardent advocates found a salient but scatologic Lenin remark to invoke in support of Lenin's heir:

> Everyone in our country is bogged down in the cursed bureaucratic morass of departments. Considerable prestige, intellect, and vigor are needed to combat them daily. Departments are shit, decrees are shit.[1]

Stalin, after reversing Lenin's New Economic Policy and its experiment with private initiative, introduced a command economy as the prod behind the crash development of heavy industry and the forced collectivization of agriculture. Nikita Khrushchev, in turn, blamed Stalinism for leaving Soviet consumers short-changed and farmers inefficient.

Where Gorbachev differs most strikingly from earlier Soviet leaders — including Leonid Brezhnev, whom he depicts as responsible for the country's long, dangerous stagnation — is in emphasizing that individual Soviets, not just their system, must reform. His economic restructuring, ambitious as it is in its intention to replace central dictation with steady decentralization, is nowhere more ambitious than in its proclaimed desire to change the mentality of Soviet bureaucrats, managers, workers and consumers.

He seeks to break the old, implicit social contract between state and citizen: the delivery of low prices, wages and social services and the guarantee of lifetime security in return for political and social passivity. In its place he seeks a new bargain: initiative from below with reduced meddling from above. And where the old system promised slowly improving living standards, the new order offers high risks, short-run austerity and only the cold comfort that reform is the alternative to catastrophe.

Trying to sum up this profound reversal of the Soviet course, the *Economist* editorialized on the 70th anniversary of the Revolution: "The next order, comrades, is not to take orders." It is hard to imagine Soviets, historically fearful of even the hint of anarchy, welcoming this command to make their own decisions and the consequences for them. But at the foundation of Gorbachev's economic program is just such a challenge to Soviet men and women at all levels to try the unknown. They are responding, at best, tentatively.

The Early Stages

On taking power, Gorbachev proclaimed the urgency of economic acceleration and won support for this priority at the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum. Initially, like Yuri Andropov, he offered tinkering and tightening discipline as measures sufficient to correct the weak points of a basically sound system. He also addressed the human factor through exhortative campaigns and administrative measures. Along with calls for greater discipline and enthusiasm in the workplace came a strict crackdown on drunkenness. Gorbachev reduced production of alcohol, closed many liquor stores and forbade the sale of alcohol before 2 p.m.

This period also witnessed large-scale personnel turnover in the economic apparatus and bureaucratic reorganization. In November 1985, for instance, Gorbachev ordered the consolidation of five ministries and one committee involved in food production and processing into one super agency, Gosagroprom. Similar mergers followed for other key sectors of the economy — machine building, fuel and energy, construction and foreign economic relations.

Meanwhile, ever-widening *glasnost* permitted economists to debate the scope and direction of reform. Their views, along with the impressions garnered in conversations with ordinary citizens during his cross-country tours, contributed to Gorbachev's push for fundamental changes.

At the 27th CPSU Congress in February-March 1986, Gorbachev outlined more wide-ranging measures. "The situation today is such that we cannot limit ourselves to partial improvements. A radical reform is needed." [2] His proposals included: reorienting central guidance of the economy away from detailed interference in enterprise activity towards long-range strategic planning; making enterprises more autonomous and responsible for their operations; reorganizing the supply system; making prices more flexible and linking them to consumer demand and democratizing management by enhancing the role of work collectives.

Few policy changes immediately followed these recommendations, but some of Gorbachev's other suggestions quickly became law. His call for greater initiative and decision making on the collective farm level, for instance, led in March 1986 to reductions in the quotas of the produce farms were required to turn over to the state. Collective and state farms received authorization to sell through the cooperative network and collective farm markets all their output above plan requirements and 30 percent of the fruits and vegetables they had previously been obliged to sell to the state. Gorbachev's proposals for changing the economic mechanism of light industry also produced a May 1986 decree, placing all of light industry on a cost-accounting, self-financing basis and ordering consumer goods factories to gear their output to consumer demand.

A more important guide to Gorbachev's priorities was the 12th Five-Year Plan, announced in June 1986. Its extremely ambitious targets — 4.1 percent average growth of national income — aimed at bringing Soviet economic performance up to world standards in just a few years. It proposed the near doubling of investment in machine building and metal working, "where the fundamental scientific and technological ideas are materialized, where new implements of labor and machine systems that determine progress in the other branches of the national economy are developed." [3] According to Soviet estimates, only 29 percent of the U.S.S.R.'s machine building currently meets world standards. This figure is supposed to rise to 80-95 percent by 1990. In order to boost productivity, the plan shifted investment away from new construction towards renovating and re-tooling existing facilities and directed ministries to step up the scrapping of obsolete equipment and machinery.

PRIVATE INITIATIVES: Since the stress on quick development of heavy industry gave consumer goods secondary significance, Gorbachev has sponsored a cautious, compensatory expansion of private initiative. For example, he has encouraged the development of private agricultural plots to increase the availability of foodstuffs without raising investment. The Central Committee in September, 1987 authorized state and collective farms to lease more land and sell buildings to those willing to work on private plots and raised the amount of credit available for buying animals.[4] The draft Model Kolkhoz Statute of January 1988 designated private plots as "a constituent part of Socialist agricultural production," a signal to

peasants that government attitudes and policies towards private plots, which have alternated among tolerance, encouragement and hostility, will be more stable in the future.[5]

Gorbachev has also widened opportunities for private enterprise in areas other than foodstuffs. A November 1986 law regulating individual labor authorized certain kinds of manufacturing (making clothing, furniture, toys, etc.) and services (like private taxis, music instruction, translating and car repairs). Interested citizens must receive permission from local Soviets to engage in such activities and must pay taxes on their earnings or an up-front fee. Soviet spokespersons in November 1986, described the program's purpose as ending the state's monopoly on services by legalizing competition from individuals.

In fact, the law serves several other purposes as well. By legalizing what existed on a widespread basis anyway, it may give the state greater control of the underground service economy and higher revenues from taxes on individual earnings. Furthermore, the new legitimacy aspires to draw people currently not working, such as homemakers, pensioners and students, into the economy.[6]

Individual labor has little ideological pedigree in the U.S.S.R. Although the 1977 Constitution guarantees self-employment, such initiative has traditionally encountered hostility from the state. Besides, there have been practically no legal sources of supply. More acceptable are cooperatives, whose expansion Lenin espoused in the last years of his life, and Gorbachev has returned to this theme.

As of February 1987, groups of not fewer than three people can form cooperatives engaging in food and consumer services and production of consumer goods. They can contract with state enterprises for facilities, supplies and transportation. Cooperatives set their own prices. After paying an income tax on earnings, they can use remaining profits for wages, social insurance and development.

Plans for Perestroika

Though the outlines of Gorbachev's vision seemed to be developing, no overarching plan materialized until mid-1987, when the June Party Plenum approved two key documents to define the party's economic program: the Basic Provisions for the Radical Restructuring of Economic Management and the Law on State Enterprises. The former provides guidelines for overhauling the entire economy; the latter spells out enterprises' rights and responsibilities. Though different aspects of the reform are scheduled for implementation at different times, the whole package is to be in place by the 13th Five-Year Plan, or 1990-1991.

To gain the central goal of greater productive efficiency, the program narrows Gosplan's role in the economy. While central planning will continue to guide the economy, Gosplan will cease issuing annual plans in 1991. Instead of micro-managment, it will concentrate on larger strategic issues, such as investment, trade, and technological development. Detailed directives to enterprises will yield to state orders ("goszakazy") for high priority items. Central planners will also send enterprises control figures, with indicators on productive activity and efficiency, although these guidelines are not supposed to be compulsory.

DECENTRALIZATION: The Basic Provisions also encompass a reform of the supply system. Gossnab (State Committee for Material and Technical Supply) will no longer centrally allocate resources on the basis of requests for inputs from enterprises. Rather, once the reform goes into effect, enterprises will buy what they need from wholesale stores operated by Gossnab. In 1988, wholesale trade is supposed to account for 15 percent of supply as producers and consumers engage in it through private contracts and agree on prices according to rules set by Goskomtsen (State Price Committee.) Most of the trade among enterprises will take place according to these negotiated prices; Goskomtsen will establish prices for only a few crucial products.

In short, enterprises will be thrown into a new world of accountability. On January 1, 1988, 60 percent of the country's enterprises, including those in the agricultural sector, went over to full-cost accounting and self-financing, with the remainder to follow in 1989. The idea is to inculcate a sense of responsibility into the system of management and create incentives for efficient production.

After fulfilling state orders which are supposed to require only a portion of production, enterprises are to make their own management decisions. Directors will have to plan and finance their own operations on a profit basis. An expansion and modification of the banking system will provide them with loans to supplement their own funds. Moreover, if enterprises prove unresponsive to customers' needs and cannot adapt to being responsible for their economic well being, they can no longer count on bailouts from the state. The consequences of failure include cutting wages, laying off workers and, in extreme cases, even bankruptcy.

Accompanying decentralization of operations at the enterprise level will be a recentralization of strategic guidance at the center. To simplify and rationalize the economic hierarchy, ministerial-level bodies will coordinate the development of complexes by controlling the operations of branch ministries. Ultimately, ministries may be absorbed into complexes, as is already the case with the agro-industrial sector.

JOB INSECURITY: The Soviet labor force now confronts the harsh reality of efficiency measures. Gorbachev has introduced a new regime of linking salaries to output and abolishing ceilings on earnings. But not even productive workers will have guaranteed job security. Stressing profit, rationalizing and streamlining, enterprises will place everyone at risk.

Some reform economists, like Nikolai Shmelev, have argued that job insecurity has its benefits: "A real danger of losing your job and going onto a temporary allowance or being obliged to work wherever you are sent is a very good cure for laziness, drunkenness and irresponsibility." [7] But Soviet economic spokespersons and Gorbachev himself have insisted that there will be no unemployment in the U.S.S.R. The creation of job placement bureaus all over the country has already begun, as have preparations for job retraining. A Soviet official told an interviewer for the January 27, 1988, issue of *Izvestiya*: "It is time to treat calmly the fact that people will not necessarily follow the same vocation throughout their lives."

As managers, under ministry pressure, urge workers to higher productivity, however, several protest strikes against extra shifts and working on weekends have occurred.[8] According to Abel Aganbegyan, reportedly Gorbachev's chief economic advisor, the introduction of stricter quality control also "produced shock" at some factories when workers stopped getting bonuses and their wages fell.[9]

Curbing bureaucratic control of the economy will entail mass firings of officials, many of whom won tenure in power under Brezhnev. *Pravda* revealed on January 21, 1988, that millions of them may have to find another line of work, and Radio Moscow's World Service specified in early February that 3 million people "are to be made redundant" by 1990. Nowhere do people readily accept the prospect of losing their jobs, and Gorbachev has already had to retreat on this front. The *Novosti* press agency disclosed in November 1987, that the number of Central Ministry officials slated for "redundancy" has fallen from 60,000 to about 40,000.[10] It is not even clear how many of these will actually be dismissed although the February 11, 1988 issue of *Pravda*, asserted that one of every two or three ministerial employees are to be let go.

FOREIGN TRADE: Gorbachev has also decentralized control of foreign trade and indicated that he views greater interdependence with the world economy as an important added stimulus to reform. He abolished not only the monopoly on exports and imports held by the Ministry of Foreign Trade but also the Ministry itself, merging it with the State Committee on Foreign Relations. Over 20 ministries and about 80 large enterprises can engage in foreign trade. Operating on a self-financing basis, they can keep some of their export proceeds to pay for imports.

Gorbachev has also reversed the long-standing prohibition on joint ventures inside the Soviet Union with capitalist firms. In order to obtain technology without paying in hard currency, to gain Western management expertise and quality control, as well as access to international marketing networks, the U.S.S.R. has invited foreign firms to establish such ventures, offering 49 percent of control. Finally, the Soviets have expressed interest in joining international organizations, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

EARLY RESULTS: The birth pangs of *perestroika* have been clearly "disruptive," in judgment of a report presented by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency to the Joint Economic Committee on April 13, 1988. Noting that Soviet economic growth in 1987 slowed to an annual rate of less than 1 percent, the CIA-DIA analysis said "poor economic performance" at the start meant that "the short-term outlook for Gorbachev's economic program is not good," a growth rate of "2 percent or less" through 1990.

The report found a sharp drop in agricultural output growth — from an annual rate of 8.2 percent in 1986 to a 3.1 percent *decline* in 1987 — and a falling off of industrial rates from 2.5 percent to 1.5 percent in the same two years;

With performance in seven out of the 10 industrial branches down compared with 1986. The machine-building sector — key to Gorbachev's modernization plans —

registered no increase in output, and the resulting shortfalls in equipment for investment reverberated throughout industry and the rest of the economy.

Gorbachev's innovations are still too limited and too new to compensate quickly for such broad, negative indicators. There are now, for instance, only about 14,000 registered cooperatives in the U.S.S.R., employing 150,000 people in a workforce of about 128 million. To facilitate faster growth in this sphere, the authorities have announced plans to introduce a bank by 1989 which would finance cooperative ventures. Earlier, however, on April 1, 1988, a progressive income tax on cooperatives' profits will come into effect.[11]

An expansion of international trade could remove some of the burden from Soviet industry, provide needed technology and management experience and raise Soviet hard currency earnings. But the prospect of establishing joint ventures in the U.S.S.R. has tempted relatively few Western businessmen. As of April 1988, there are only 33 agreed deals, though more are pending.[12]

The reasons for this slow development are Soviet measures that deter foreign firms from gaining too much control or too much profit and from threatening domestic Soviet industry. The executive director and three of the five members of the board of directors of all joint ventures must be Soviet citizens. Foreign investors also face serious difficulties in repatriating profits and must pay high taxes on gains. The Soviet economist Shmelev is not surprised by the low number of joint ventures to date. Recently, he asked,

> If in the U.S.A. [an American businessman] pays 34 percent profits tax, somewhere in Southeast Asia — 20-25 percent but in the Soviet Union — 44 percent, is there any sense in his investing money in our country?[13]

Shortages of consumer goods and services also mark Soviet life and attitudes to change. Gorbachev's plan to favor machine building and metal working and the slow development of private enterprise mean no quick improvement in this sphere and thus little to buy with the higher earnings of harder work. Though light industry was among the first sectors of the economy to switch to cost-accounting and self-financing, the results so far have been disappointing. According to the State Committee of Statistics, light industry failed to deliver about 1 billion rubles worth of contracts in 1987, and continues to produce low quality goods. And cooperatives have thus far produced "a drop in the bucket."[14] *Izvestiya* reported on February 9, 1988 that while people's monetary income had grown even faster than envisaged in the plan, goods shortages were actually increasing.

Problems of Partial Reform

Many specialists question the ambitious targets of the 12th Five-Year Plan. Gorbachev is pursuing acceleration and restructuring at the same time. Thus, two different systems — one based on administrative methods, the other on economic guidelines — are to lead to the predominance of the latter by the next Five-Year Plan.

Having to fulfill targets while trying to renovate and absorb new technology will be hard for managers, who have tended to give preference to the former. The slower they go, the more their performance will impede the planned enhancement of enterprises' re-

sponsibility, autonomy and the restructuring of the supply system.[15]

As for the modernization strategy itself, many of the U.S. Government and private sector economists who analyzed it for the Congress' Joint Economic Committee in 1987, doubted that its goals could be achieved in the short timeframe envisioned. The uneven emphasis in investment, they claim, will create bottlenecks when relatively neglected sectors fail to produce goods needed for the program's intended beneficiary, heavy industry. Other problems that will have to be overcome include: managerial resistance to risky new technology; the traditional Soviet preference for new construction, as opposed to refurbishing old facilities; reluctance to retire obsolete equipment and inadequate incentives for research and development personnel.[16]

DELAYING PRICE REFORM: In addition, the Gorbachev program suffers from contradictions, inconsistencies and omissions. One of the most important omissions is the failure to effect price reforms before implementing other aspects of the package. The Basic Provisions merely stressed the need for a comprehensive price reform and charged the State Price Committee to prepare one before 1991. It will be difficult, therefore, to gauge accurately whether enterprises already placed on cost accounting and self-financing are really operating profitably. "The Soviets were well aware of this problem," said Abel Aganbegyan in a recent interview, "but decided not to wait for another three years. We decided on a transition period so that people can learn to work under self-management."[17]

Price reform is politically sensitive. Allowing the price of products to reflect supply and demand would raise the cost of many basic goods and services, such as bread, fuel, rent and transportation. State subsidies (estimated at 90 billion rubles in 1988) have maintained artificially low prices on these items for decades. The population has become accustomed to paying very little for them, and price hikes in the U.S.S.R. have elicited strikes and disturbances several times in the past. Letters published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of January 20, 1988, for instance, express alarm about rumored increases in food prices. The regime has decided to put off the question of price reform until 1990 and has promised that extensive public discussion would precede any increases.

THE CENTER HOLDS: Gorbachev's program is one of incomplete decentralization. While ministries and regional party officials are no longer supposed to tell enterprises what to produce, they will still be responsible for the activity of the enterprises they oversee, and bureaucrats seem likely to continue to meddle in every aspect of production.

It is also an open question whether or not crucial enterprises, such as those producing for defense, will really be permitted to go bankrupt. If they continue receiving subsidies, cost-accounting will not be applied uniformly to all sectors.[18] Soviet Finance Minister B.I. Gostev said last December,

> Of course, I do not exclude another possibility, that of rendering aid by the Ministry of Finance . . . to the numerous enterprises that lag behind or experience difficult financial circumstances.

Such rescues, however, would create further imbalances, probably at the expense of the civilian sector.

Another major danger to enterprises' independence is the system of state orders, *goszakazy*, which take precedence over customer demand and, according to Aganbegyan, currently determine 90 percent of enterprise activity. By 1991, this figure should diminish to under 30 percent. But depending on how high a portion the center ultimately absorbs, ostensibly independent managers will have greatly reduced leeway. "If the state orders production of most goods," a former Soviet economist noted, "there is little that managers can buy with their newly available funds. . ." [19]

Enterprises in the agricultural sector remain equally tied to the state. If industry is still bound by *goszakazy*, state and collective farms must still meet government procurement quotas, even if they have been allowed greater latitude for disposing of above-plan output. And while Gorbachev's call for expanding the use of family and brigade contracts will likely become law, these arrangements assume imposed norms. The draft legislation on collective farms, published in January 1988, makes it clear that no retreat from collectivization is envisioned.

Restricting the autonomy of enterprises also jeopardizes the expansion of the private sector and its ability to take up some slack in consumer goods production. Factory directors compelled to complete state orders first will be less likely to provide goods to individual-run or cooperative businesses.

Moreover, the private sector remains shackled. The very legislation authorizing entrepreneurial activity forbids hiring labor and limits full-time participation mostly to homemakers, pensioners and students. People employed in the state sector may engage in private activity only in their spare time.

Those who nonetheless manage to establish a profitable business frequently attract the envy and hostility of a populace unaccustomed to the idea of personal economic success. As a Leningrad taxi driver told Helsinki Commission staffers in December 1987, "For 70 years, they've beaten it into our heads that there shouldn't be rich people." Newspapers have published letters from irate citizens, complaining about departures from Socialist ideals or about the very high prices cooperatives charge for their goods and services.

Finally, strict government campaigns against unearned income undermine the attempt to expand the private sector. Along with uncertainty about Gorbachev's staying power and memories of past shifts in policy, many would-be entrepreneurs have reason to hesitate. A Moscow cab driver asked Commission staffers,"Who can give us a guarantee that policy won't change tomorrow, and the very people who took seriously the government's call to display initiative won't wind up in prison?"

Opposition to Reform

In addition to its flaws, the Gorbachev program has foes: bureaucrats whose jobs may vanish, party officials whose powers would be curtailed, managers unready to take risks, even workers who expect their jobs to last for life. The most powerful opposition is that at the top of the Soviet structure.

The crucial and unanswerable question is how much support Gorbachev's program enjoys in the Politburo and Central Committee. It is indicative that in many speeches, he has felt compelled to defend *perestroika* against its opponents. Gorbachev has often repeated that the party leadership is united on the need for economic changes, but while the leadership knows it must decentralize the system and afford broader scope to individual initiative, many fear losing control of the economy and yielding to the market.

The reform, therefore, has bound with one hand what the other hand has released. Enterprises are supposed to manage their own affairs — but not really. Private initiative is unleashed — but not too far. Administrative and economic approaches to production are supposed to coincide — but in fact, they tend to contradict each other.

A good example of the built-in conflict is the law on State Acceptance (Gospriyomka). Legislation of July 1986 mandated new targets for quality, offering bonuses for high performance and penalties for poor production at 1,500 enterprises, whose output will be monitored by a new body, the State Acceptance Service. Attached to the State Committee for Standards, it can accept or reject what enterprises produce.

Nikolai Shmelev has pointed to an inconsistency in this arrangement: "State acceptance excludes from quality evaluation the most interested party — the consumer, be it the enterprise for which the output is intended, or the man in the store . . . the fundamental defect of the present economic system — diktat by the producer — will basically remain inviolate." [20]

Still, no reform is ever fully consistent or acceptable to all constituencies. Shmelev and other Soviet economists have pointed out the defects in the party's economic program. It is unclear whether their recommendations for pushing the reform farther will find support among the top party leadership.

What is certain is that the current plans for restructuring the Soviet economy guarantee widespread uncertainty and dislocation for the promise of future benefits. But if Gorbachev cannot show some results, especially in the improvement of consumer goods and services, whatever support exists in society at large for *perestroika* may dissipate. And then the inchoate coalition of opponents could find itself strong enough to end reform efforts and oust the Soviet Union's reformer-in-chief.

FOOTNOTES

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RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A short hand account of the Soviet Union's Gorbachev era human rights record might go: past violations — partly redressed; current violations — notably restrained; future violations — potentially unlimited.

Although it over-simplifies a very mixed pattern of performance, such a summary at least describes the general relaxation of active police measures against dissent in 1985-87. Those years have seen:

* — the release (based on written pledges not to engage in further "illegal" activities) of 383 known political prisoners — 329 of them freed in 1987 — including such renowned activists, allowed or forced to emigrate, as Anatoly Shcharansky, Yuri Orlov, Anatoly Koryagin and Josif Begun;

* — the return to Moscow of Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov after nearly six years of exile in Gorky;

* — the release of 83 individuals — 64 of them in 1987 — who had been held in psychiatric hospitals because of their political views and activities;

* — tolerance of sizable public demonstrations by aggrieved minorities — Jews and Crimean Tatars — and aroused nationalities in the Baltic States and Armenia;

* — new latitude — to build churches, enroll seminarians and import or print Bibles — for religious faiths willing to accept official oversight of their activities; and

* — a sharp increase — from very low levels — in the numbers of Jews, Armenians and Germans permitted to emigrate and in the permissions granted Soviet citizens to visit family members in the United States.

Those and other advances in respect for basic human rights represent a clear change from Soviet conduct during the first ten years after the signing of the Helsinki Accords. They do not, however, signal either that the docket of past abuses has been cleared or that the current phase of relative improvement is becoming a permanent feature of Soviet internal policy.

On the contrary, the slow pace of legal reform — when a stroke of the pen could remove at least two of the most frequently used pretexts for repression, the "slander" and "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" articles of the Criminal Code — suggests the presence of determined opposition to human rights liberalization at the highest levels of the Communist Party and Soviet Government. Until the rule of law — and Soviet laws themselves — afford genuine protection to individual and civil liberties, no objective assessment of Soviet conduct can overlook:

* — the 400-1,000 citizens still held in prisons and camps for acts of political conscience;

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* — the 95-150 people being subjected to psychiatric treatment because of their dissenting views;
* — the forced emigration of Baltic activists and the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the guise of Russian nationalism;
* — the restrictions being imposed not to control, but to preclude, public protests, including a show of military force in Armenia;
* — the continuing refusal to allow religious believers and clergy to proselytize — even through Sunday schools;
* — the monopoly of mass media by the Government and the lack of access by the general public to the foreign press;
* — the continuing attacks in the Soviet press on independent political movements such as the independent peace groups;
* — the remaining, major obstacles to both emigration and travel — including the hardships those barriers work on tens of thousands of still-divided families; and
* — the absence of either legal guarantees or an independent judiciary able to insure justice for Soviet citizens who not only "know" their rights, as Principle VII of the Final Act states, but seek to "act upon" them.

In the U.S.S.R., despite Gorbachevian calls for citizens to show independent thought and initiative, the Communist Party retains its monopoly of political control. For the present, its leader has granted an unaccustomed measure of freedom to the citizenry. What a different leader might choose to do in the same area is unknown and unknowable.

LIBERTIES AND THE LAW

No visitor to the Soviet capital who had known its atmosphere before 1985 can miss the freedom Gorbachev's rule has brought to civic discourse among the intelligentsia, the stratum of pre-Revolutionary and of Soviet society defined by its engagement in independent thought.[1] "Remarkably," reported a one-time spokesman for Jewish refuseniks, "most of the people I met in Moscow were not afraid to speak their minds in terms unthinkable 12 years ago." [2]

Especially after the arrests of Orlov, Shcharansky and others in early 1977 and the heavy sentences imposed on them for having tried to hold the Soviet Union publicly accountable for its human rights conduct, speaking one's mind in Moscow became a perilous activity. Ten years later, dissenters are still harassed. But in no reported instance from September 1986 until March 1988 have any been arrested, tried or convicted on charges of either disseminating "slander" against the Soviet Union or conducting "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

The laws forbidding and severely punishing dissent are still on the books, articles 190-1 and 70 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic, for instance. In Gorbachev's third year, at least, the authorities were not only not enforcing those statutes; they were also releasing several hundred political prisoners who had been incarcerated for violating them. And, Gorbachev indicated in early 1987, the laws were soon to be dropped or notably softened.

Political Prisoners — Free and Not

Although some of the better-known prisoners of conscience — men like Shcharansky (traded for a Czech spy on the KGB payroll) and Orlov (part of the Daniloff-for-Zakharov swap) — were given their freedom and often their ticket to Western exile in 1985 and 1986, the gates of the Soviet gulag did not seem to open wide until after the December 1986 death of Anatoly Marchenko, one of the most revered and stubborn dissidents. Many observers believe that the shock and protest over his death in a prison hospital touched a high-level political nerve. In any event, less than two weeks later, Mikhail Gorbachev telephoned Andrei Sakharov to tell the famed dissenter that his Gorky exile had been lifted. And within a few months the process of amnestying large numbers of prisoners with permission to remain in the U.S.S.R. got underway.

When Sakharov returned to Moscow on December 23, 1986, his first public statement repeated one of his long-standing appeals: freedom for all political dissenters serving terms in Soviet labor camps, prisons, and exile.[3] Less than two months later, *Izvestiya* announced that the Supreme Soviet was pardoning 140 people convicted under articles 70 and 190-1 after they pledged "that in the

future they would not be involved in illegal activities." A Soviet spokesperson said that another 140 cases were under review.[4]

By the end of March — in the largest Soviet mass release of political prisoners since the Khrushchev era — 200 had been freed with pardons, though not formal rehabilitations, that left them exposed to reincarceration if and when the authorities decide they have violated their promises of obedient conduct. The actual oaths seemed to vary, depending on the camp or prison authorities and the negotiating skills of the inmates. As Sergei Grigoryants joked, "They asked me to write a statement that amounted to a promise that I would not take to the streets with a machine gun." [5]

Following the February decree, a June 1987 amnesty in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, gave freedom to first-time offenders under article 190-1 and reduced sentences handed down under article 70. One result was to empty the camps of all the women "politicals" in detention.

For the 329 political prisoners released last year, however, freedom is still a relative matter. Many have experienced difficulty in finding employment or residence permission from local authorities. Paradoxically, a July 1987 letter received in the West from several former prisoners, complains that those who completed their sentences before the first pardon remain under "administrative surveillance" (an ill-defined practice whereby former prisoners are still accountable for their movements to the local police) and, hence, have more problems in resettling.

For them and for others, Andrei Sakharov's mixed verdict on the nature and pace of human rights progress under Gorbachev is a fitting one: "The times are changing slowly and in some ways, not at all. But the changes are real." [6]

IN THE CAMPS: For the approximately 350 men and women — 12 of them, former Helsinki Accord monitors — still incarcerated or in exile by the count of the International Helsinki Federation and for the perhaps 600 others whom some Soviet sources tally, "life in prison," said the U.S. State Department in 1987, "continues to be marked by isolation, poor diet, and malnutrition, compulsory hard labor, beatings, frequent illness and inadequate medical care."

Through 1986, in fact, reports received by the Commission indicated that labor camp conditions had worsened, even that guards and criminal inmates were intensifying the level of political violence and isolation used to demoralize political prisoners.[7] Writing his mother from Perm camp 36-1, former Estonian activist Mart Niklus, who is still in confinement, reported: "In Kuchino . . . everything is unchanged." [8]

By the end of December of last year, eight months after low-key criticism of the labor camps appeared briefly in the Soviet press, Niklus at least had more company. All political prisoners had by then been moved to Perm 36, from a camp in Mordovia and from Perm camps 35 and 37.[9] And, with no inmates left, the women's prison at Barashevo in Mordovia had been closed.

Sergei Grigoryants, who went from Chistopol Prison in February 1987 to found and edit the unofficial journal, *Glasnost*, has noted that the June 1987 amnesty did not include provisions to reduce the camps' production quotas. Failure to meet these heavy work norms, he added, can give wardens the pretext for cutting down on

releases by trumping up insubordination charges. "The zone has proven immune to reform," he declared.[10] Despite official Soviet claims that 50,000 prisoners — the vast majority of them ordinary criminals — have been freed, Grigoryants said that his diverse sources indicate that "no more than 10 percent of the prison population has been released."[11]

Psychiatric Abuse

Aside from the release of 64 Soviet citizens committed to psychiatric hospitals as punishment for political crimes,[12] candor has been the most notable 1987 change in Soviet practices in the field of mental health. Not only did the official press begin to reveal the sorry state of the discipline — although not the abuse of psychiatry as a weapon against dissent, but Soviet psychiatrists visiting the United States also agreed "in principle" to let American colleagues visit them, and, presumably, examine their patients.[13]

Along with a TASS announcement in January 1988, that the police would no longer run maximum security "special" clinics and that new regulations would give mental patients the right to contest their commitment in court, recent developments suggest a decided effort to correct one of the ugliest forms of Soviet repression.[14]

The new trend, however, makes few concessions to long-standing criticisms. Nor has it brought freedom to 95 political prisoners known to be still undergoing treatment or dismissal to doctors associated with past abuses. In fact, Dr. Marat Vartanyan, one of the best-known apologists for Soviet psychiatric practices, has been appointed to head the All-Union Center for Mental Health.

"Psychiatry as a weapon in the fight against dissidence still exists," said religious activist Alexander Ogorodnikov, a prisoner from 1978 to 1987, after the TASS announcement. "I think the changes are aimed at limiting the purely non-political abuse of psychiatry" to regain respectability in the international psychiatric community.[15]

INSIDE STORIES: Until last year the official press did not admit that the reputation of Soviet psychiatry was in any way stained. But beginning with a July 11 *Izvestiya* piece, "Without Defense," Soviet journalists have written several exposés of the improper commitment of sane men and women, even of corruption among their doctors. The most candid article appeared November 11, 1987 in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* with a direct attack on the diagnosis of "sluggish schizophrenia" that the late Dr. Andrei Snezhevsky had used to describe mental illness "with no obvious symptoms." Although the paper did not disclose that the diagnosis had been imposed extensively on dissenters, the report did say that it was "very broad and used very frequently" and "can be applied to practically anyone, even someone sane by conventional definition."

Moreover, the paper reported cases of doctors' granting false certificates of insanity to common criminals evading prosecution and of orderlies' raping women patients and forcibly removing the gold crowns from inmates' teeth. Some drug treatments, it added, "can even turn a sane person into an insane one," and some forms of "rehabilitation" amount to "an assault on human dignity."[16]

Dr. Georgy Morozov, head of the Serbsky Institute over which Snezhevsky once presided, has dismissed such reports as "incompetent" and "slanderous" journalism. He also claims that the new regulations, far from requiring significant changes, simply reflect instructions long in effect in Soviet psychiatry.[17] The Health Ministry's chief psychiatrist, however, announced that the new rules should mean dropping 2 million people from the Government's registry of mental patients, a stigmatic listing that limits civil rights, such as travel and employment and that raises risks of involuntary commitment.[18]

PROGNOSIS: Seeking readmission to the World Psychiatric Association it left in 1983, on the verge of expulsion, the Soviet mental health profession still has a lot to explain and to correct. Few who have followed its history are likely to forget first-hand reports like the one of the brutal treatment administered to Serafim Yesyukov, incarcerated after he sought to emigrate:

> He refused (to take pills). They first tried jamming the pills into his mouth. Then the orderly strapped him to the bed and employed two mentally ill inmates to help hold him down while they closed his nostrils and tried to force him to open his mouth. His nose bled. Finally they gave up and injected instead — with a promise to repeat the process if he refused the pills the next time.[19]

Citizen Action, Civic Discourse

In a handful of unofficial but increasingly widely circulated journals, in thousands of lively gatherings of private groups and clubs and in scores of public demonstrations, Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost* is bringing a semblance of civil society back to life in a country from which it had seemed, after 1917, to be all but erased. And unlike the brief emergence of such energies during Nikita Khrushchev's thaws, the discourse in the streets and meeting rooms is not in the elliptical form of daring poetry but in the direct language of social and political agitation.

Glasnost creates many dilemmas for party officials. None pose greater problems than the outpouring of such organized but independent citizen action. Launched by the party leadership but still unsanctioned by legal guarantees, this tide of self-expression is beginning to elude party control and to generate forceful but intermittent police reaction.

Not yet a movement — rather a spectrum of interests newly given their voice — the spread of civic action is as closely watched by outsiders as by the Kremlin. Given its head, it could eventually transform Soviet politics. Violently repressed, it will remind the West that the Soviet regime cannot tolerate change.

INDEPENDENT PRESSES: Having failed in their campaign of arrests and intimidation to abolish the multiform *samizdat* publications of the 1960's and 1970's, Soviet authorities by 1985 had at least managed to silence the most respected human rights journals — the *Chronicle of Current Events*, established in 1968, and the *Documents of the Moscow Helsinki Group*, begun in 1976. Once released from imprisonment, however, the editors of the earlier publications returned to their typewriters with restored zeal and extended contact networks.

The result has been the appearance of an array of *samizdat* bulletins in Moscow and Leningrad and, to a lesser extent, in other

major cities. Earliest and best-known is the journal *Glasnost*, edited by Sergei Grigoryants. His former collaborator Lev Timofeyev has also begun circulating *Referendum*, while a Leningrad group puts out *Mercury*. The first two concentrate on human rights issues; *Mercury* focuses on local and environmental affairs; other specialized journals report on the arts, economics and religion.[20]

Devoid of comment but packed with news, *Express-Khronika* first appeared on street-corners in central Moscow in August 1987, the product of Aleksandr Podrabinek, whose campaign against the political abuse of psychiatry earned him two terms in the labor camps before his 35th birthday. A weekly, averaging about 20 pages and an initial press run of 150-170 copies, *Express-Khronika* feeds a hunger for human rights news that authorized reporting only teases. "We are starved for information, not points of view," Podrabinek says. "Facts — we need facts."

"In the past, of course," adds his colleague, Sergei Lyozov, "the official press would publish nothing at all. *Glasnost* means they are now publishing bits and scraps, always distorted and always weeks late." [21]

With its reports on demonstrations and nationalities, activities around the U.S.S.R., on treatment of political prisoners and demonstrations by Crimean Tatars in Central Asia, *Express-Khronika* amounts to a real-time news service from the Soviet underground. The challenge it presents to the authorities is being answered in two ways. *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on March 27, 1988, labeled Podrabinek a "dealer in slander," and KGB plain-clothesmen attacked him with their fists the same day, as he hawked copies of the purple-covered journal in downtown Moscow.[22]

INDEPENDENT GROUPS: According to the February 1, 1988 issue of *Pravda*, there are now over 30,000 citizens groups in the Soviet Union, representing, as do the independent publications, a wide range of social interests and viewpoints. Some are openly political, such as the reestablished Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group; others pursue such interests as preserving cultural monuments, protecting the environment, advancing music and the arts.

Groups with political agendas, such as the Pacifist Group for Trust Between the East and West, tend to be called "unofficial," while those considered to be apolitical are usually referred to as "informal." Both kinds are, in theory, legal instances of civic organizations. But according to a 1932 law, the groups must have as their goal "active participation in the building of socialism" in the U.S.S.R. or in the defense of the country.

They must also be controlled by the party. While visiting Moscow in November 1987, former Soviet citizen Vladimir Kozlovsky was told by Moscow acquaintances that the Russian Nationalist *Pamyat* Society, a linguistics society and a homosexuals' club had all applied for registration with the Moscow City Council. A member of the linguistic club reported that it had been refused on the grounds that "no one in the city council had enough knowledge of linguistics to exert control over it." [23]

Some independent citizens groups have been granted permission by local authorities to meet in public buildings. One group that was not was the Press Club *Glasnost*. When it organized the independent human rights seminar in Moscow in December 1987, authori-

ties closed a building that had been rented for the group's opening plenary session, allegedly for reasons of public health. Nevertheless, the seminar was allowed to take place in separate apartments in the city, where working groups met to discuss various issues. Approximately 400 persons, including Western observers, discussed such issues as "law and society," "human contacts," "nationality issues," "religious freedom" and "culture." Although some would-be participants from outside Moscow were prevented from attending, the meeting was a milestone in the Soviet human rights movement.

IN THE STREETS: Article 190-3 of the RSFSR Criminal Code provides labor camp sentences up to three years long for "organization of, or active participation in group actions disrupting the peace." It is not being stringently enforced. As a *New York Times* correspondent wrote in mid-1987:

> A few months ago it would have been inconceivable for a human rights protest to occur in the heart of the capital without the participants being quickly whisked away by the police.[24]

By late 1987, in fact, public demonstrations in the city on a wide spectrum of issues had become almost commonplace by Soviet standards. Noting the rallies held in the Baltic States that year to commemorate significant dates in their history, Latvian dissident and protest organizer Roland Silaraups testified to the Commission in October:

> . . . in Latvia today, it is easier to express one's opinions — opinions which are independent of those held by the authorities — without fear of immediate arrest, than has been the case in the past.

Aside from the major and often sustained protest demonstrations by nationality activists described in the next section, a variety of other protesters have appeared in the Soviet streets. In Lvov, for example, twenty members of the Ukranian branch of the Trust Group demonstrated against Soviet policy in Afghanistan. And environmentalists in Leningrad have protested destruction of cultural monuments and dangers to the ecology in the area.

Demonstrations were even held in support of deposed Moscow city party head, Boris Yeltsin, both in Moscow and Sverdlovsk, his former home. The February 9, 1988 issue of *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, features a photo of animal rights activists picketing at Moscow's "Dynamo" Metro Station.

The response to demonstrations seems to vary with location, timing and circumstances. Following Crimean Tatar protests in the summer of 1987, a delegation was allowed to meet with Council of Ministers President Gromyko to discuss the Tatars' grievances. Some of the most active participants, however, were fined 40 to 50 rubles, about a week's average wage, and forced to leave the capital.

CONFLICTING SIGNALS: Shortly thereafter the Moscow City Council passed a measure barring demonstrations on or in the Red Square area or on the main streets of central Moscow. New laws have also been adopted by municipal authorities in areas with high concentrations of Crimean Tatars to crack down on their continuing demonstrations. Authorities in Sverdlovsk passed similar regulations in response to the pro-Yeltsin demonstrations, as did the

city authorities of Ufa, after citizens took to the streets to protest urban air pollution. Ufa officials did, however, promise to consult with Moscow about ending construction of additional chemical plants. Demonstrations and public meetings in late winter of 1988 with city officials in Nizhny Tagil, produced a promise to cease operations at a local coke smelting plant that had, according to protesters, dangerously raised the level of pollution in the city, and had caused 54 children to be stillborn in 1987.[25]

In Estonia, city officials met ahead of time with organizers of the August 23, 1987 demonstration and worked out a tenuous framework for the rally. While the first Latvian demonstration in June 1987 went unmolested, violence broke out at its August successor when police attacked organizers in Riga. By November 14, the Latvian authorities had developed another technique: filling the city with their own "demonstrators," a method subsequently emulated in Moscow, keeping some organizers under house arrest and expelling others from the U.S.S.R.

In — and perhaps because of — the presence of observers from the International Helsinki Federation, 100 Jewish refuseniks were allowed to demonstrate in central Moscow on January 28, 1988 without interference. On other occasions, demonstrators have been beaten by plainclothes police or kept under preemptive house arrest. Only a handful, however, have been jailed and these for two weeks or less under what is termed "administrative arrest."

So while demonstrators are not immediately whisked away by the police in every case, article 190-3 is still on the books. In his Commission testimony, Silaraups warned that, . . . the KGB continues to collect information about these people so, if there is a change in the political climate, they can be held accountable.

And *Pravda* wrote on December 27, 1987:

> There are groups who, under the label of independent organizations, directly carry out provocatory work, press for the creation of opposition parties, "free" labor unions, push phony culture instead of genuine values. Their activities sometimes acquire a clearly illegal nature: without permission from the authorities, they organize demonstrations, and at times, disorders, illegally print and distribute documents inimicable to socialism.

On October 7, 1987, Soviet Constitution Day, police detained about 15 citizens who publicly called for revision of the 10-year-old Constitution to reflect *glasnost* and *democratizatsia*. One of the KGB officers told the group: "*Perestroika* is already over."[26]

Protection of the Law

To gauge the progress Soviets have made in the field of human rights, it is necessary to look beyond activities they have tolerated under Gorbachev's rule to liberties they have guaranteed. It is a short search that turns up little.

Despite public promises in early 1987 of major reforms in the Criminal Code, either the complexity of the task or political resistance to it have left old laws in force and new ones largely in abeyance. Following a call by Gorbachev himself for review and reform of Soviet laws to bring them in line with his program of social change, the Party Central Committee formally ordered "the first systematic examination of criminal laws since the existing code was drawn up in 1961."[27] The order, in turn, formalized a cam-

paign by Soviet spokesmen to herald sweeping liberalization — even, it was suggested, abolition of the statutes that made political actions into crimes.

Publicity outpaced performance. More recent Soviet statements promise only to drop article 190-1 punishing "dissemination of clearly false fabrications slandering the Soviet political and social system" and to abolish provisions for sentencing offenders to internal exile. Considering that the slander statute was added to the code in 1966 without previous public discussion, it is discouraging that it has not been erased with similar dispatch.

Article 190-3, giving the courts grounds to punish public demonstrations, was another Brezhnev era addition to the laws that could be — but have not been — summarily dropped. Even if they were removed, Soviet legal expert Vladimir Kudryatsev indicated in early 1988 that article 70 on "anti-Soviet agitation" will remain, albeit rewritten. "It is now important," he said, "for us to draw a clear line, through clear formulations, between the desired free statement of opinion, on the one hand, and the fanning of anti-State activities on the other." [28] Since article 70 carries stiffer penalties — up to seven years in labor camps — than article 190 (up to three years), its retention could leave dissenters exposed to harsher treatment than before.

Even the one legal liberalization that has taken effect turns out to have limited impact. A new law giving Soviet citizens the right to appeal acts by officials, came into force on New Year's Day, 1988, but a commentary on it published since, specifies that it does not apply to decisions by any but individual officials, presumably abusing their power, or by any officials in the Office of Visas and Registration (OVIR) that grants or denies permission to emigrate.

As exiled Soviet criminal defense lawyer Dina Kaminskaya has told Commission staff, earlier laws already provided legal recourse, in theory, against arbitrary acts of housing authorities and employers. In practice, such disputes were rarely pursued through the courts and rarely to the satisfaction of individual citizens.

One other small sign of progress is a Moscow City Council decree at the end of 1987 that will allow former prisoners with a single conviction for a "serious crime" to be registered with spouses or parents as legal residents of the capital. Those with more than one conviction — Aleksandr Podrabinek, for example — are still barred from residence in the city except in cases of medical necessity.

The greatest change for the better remains the non-enforcement of repressive laws. Until that practice is made permanent by real revisions of the Criminal Code and by a judiciary independent of official pressure, the rights of Soviet citizens to question the state openly are in the hands of the state itself, subject to whatever restrictions this regime or its successors decide to impose.

Looking Forward

Mikhail Gorbachev's calls for a more open Soviet society, for more initiative and involvement by Soviet citizens in shaping their lives and implementing his reforms, have already had remarkable effects on correcting past abuses of human rights. But he has not changed the system of political rule by a single, all-powerful party, and he has indicated that he does not seek more than a measure of

political competition *within* the Communist Party — certainly not from forces outside or opposed to it.

Given that built-in limitation to his reform goals, civil liberty as the West conceives it, can never be the broad foundation of Soviet law and society. The latitude Gorbachev has granted for dissent — energetically exploited by many who have suffered before for having the courage of their convictions — is new in Soviet experience. But it is a freedom that can be curtailed as easily as it was granted.

Andrei Sakharov judges progress in these cautionary words sent to a June 14, 1987 graduation ceremony at the College of Staten Island:

> The changes in the internal life of the Soviet Union which have been proposed by Gorbachev are important and necessary. I want to believe that his intentions are serious.
>
> But what has been accomplished to date is merely a beginning. It has only scratched the surface of the monolith of Soviet society.

Beneath that surface, expectations are rising. A young Socialist, a veteran of 13 months in the KGB's Lefortovo Prison in Moscow in 1982-83, presses the case for parliamentary elections, opposition political parties, a free press and broad civil liberties. In meetings of groups like the Club for Social Initiatives or Democratic *Perestroika*, 29-year-old Boris Kagarlitsky argues for radical change:

> The young have not lived through the Stalin crimes or the thaw under Khrushchev. We have different experiences and a different psychology and cultural background. . .We've never really even had socialism here. It's time we tried.[29]

FOOTNOTES

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22. *Ibid.*
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24. Philip Taubman, "In Moscow, A New Era?" *New York Times*, July 29, 1987.
25. Associated Press, "Smog-Covered Soviet City Site of Mass Anti-Pollution Protest," Apr. 8, 1988.
26. Vladimir Kozlovsky, "Return to Moscow", *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, Jan. 26, 1988.
27. Celestine Bohlen, "Soviets Would Drop Law Used to Jail Dissidents," *Washington Post*, Sept. 22, 1987.
28. Quoted in *Der Spiegel*, Jan. 25, 1988.

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EXPRESSING NATIONAL IDENTITIES

According to its heirs, the 1917 Revolution transformed relations among nationalities and ethnic groups. From the Russian Empire that Lenin had termed a "prison of peoples," emerged, says the Soviet slogan, "a fraternal union of equal peoples." The facts do not support quite such a happy picture. In Soviet times, tensions have persisted at and just below the surface among the U.S.S.R.'s 103 separate nationalities — 22 of them with over 1 million members, 49 with fewer than 100,000.

In Mikhail Gorbachev's first three years, in fact, old aspirations and resentments flared anew. Many Western (and perhaps Soviet) analysts believe Gorbachev's own policies — relaxing central authority in economic matters, encouraging public discussion of touchy issues — have stimulated the revival of vocal nationalism. By upsetting old arrangements for the sharing of top jobs — even the number and quality of them to be shared — among representatives of competing ethnic groups, Gorbachev's reform drive exacerbates frictions without providing new mechanisms for resolving them.

A clear example of this cause and effect was the violent rioting in late 1986 in Alma Ata, following the ouster of Kazakhstan's top party leader — accused of corruption — and his replacement by a Russian instead of another Kazakh. Less easily explicable — and nowhere predicted — was the combination of massive, sustained public protests in Armenia and ethnic violence in Azerbaijan, early in 1988.

While they followed direct attacks on the Armenian Party leadership by Gorbachev, among others, the protests did not seem directly related to the criticism. Rather, the orderly street demonstrations in Yerevan focused on demands to reunify an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan with the main republic. Gorbachev personally heard out the protesters' case with apparent sympathy in late February, but *Pravda* on March 21 bluntly condemned it as an "anti-socialist" attempt to "exploit people's emotions for provocative aims so as to reverse society's development."[1]

More widely expected but so far less extensive and explosive, dissent against Russian rule and Soviet policies has also come out into the open in the Baltic States, incorporated into the U.S.S.R. as part of the spoils of World War II. Even more assertive has been a well-publicized nationalist campaign among right-wing Russians, espousing an open anti-Semitism and an implicitly anti-Soviet nostalgia for a vanished Russian culture, safely isolated from Western influences.

Those who can say, "I told you so," cannot, however, forecast the course of the nationalist ferment with any degree of certainty. It has put Gorbachev on the defensive — "Show me a country without nationalist problems," he snapped at reporters covering his

March 1988 visit to Yugoslavia, "and I will move there right away." [2] It has also required him to admit to the Central Committee plenum of February 18, 1988 that the regulation of relations among nationalities is "the most fundamental, vital issue of our society," one he said the party's top body should address in a special session this summer.[3]

No observer can say with certainty that Gorbachev is waiting too long to do too little to quiet nationalist feelings. But to the extent that his reform drive and *glasnost*, especially, have helped raise expectations of change and of fairer treatment for various minorities, the outpouring of separate ethnic demands could, in combination, drive him to pull back from his declared course or, like some of his predecessors, try to rein in forcefully the nationalist forces he has helped unleash.

Central Asia

The first major explosion of those forces occurred as a two-day riot in Alma Ata in December 1986, after Kazakhstan's First Secretary, Dinmukhamed Kunaev, was ousted and replaced by Gennady Kolbin, an ethnic Russian, who had been secretary of the *oblast* committee in Ulyanovsk. Kunaev, who lost his place in the Politburo a month later, was charged with overseeing large-scale corruption, an accusation also brought posthumously against the party boss of neighboring Uzbekistan.[4]

Official versions of the Alma Ata "events" list 2 dead and 200 others injured, but *samizdat* sources put the toll at 280 Kazakh students and 29 militiamen and soldiers killed, with 2,138 protesters arrested. Where both accounts agree is that the Kunaev-Kolbin switch sparked an outpouring of resentment. According to an eyewitness version, the crowd in Alma Ata's central Brezhnev Square gathered to demonstrate against Russians holding jobs — especially in the army and police — that the youngsters felt should go to their own people.

What began as a peaceful rally of students holding placards with the slogan, "Kazakhstan must belong to the Kazakhs," and singing national songs turned violent after the crowd heard the Republic's premier list all the state posts in Kazakh hands and ask, "What are you unhappy about? Which of your rights have been violated?"

When the demonstrators still refused to disperse, militia and soldiers surrounded the square and attempted to force them out, an effort that took a day and much violence to succeed.[5] While reports of tension in the region continue — including an April 1987 incident involving the desecration of a Muslim cemetery by Russian "hooligans" [6] — there have been no further, reported violent flareups between Russians and Muslims in Kazakhstan or the neighboring Central Asian Republics.

ISLAM AND NATIONALISM: Nervous party ideologists, nonetheless, continue to attack the increase in the influence of Islam — a stimulant to nationalist sentiments across Soviet frontiers in Iran and Afghanistan — and the ineffectiveness of "atheistic education" on the U.S.S.R.'s estimated 45 million Muslims, 16 percent of the Soviet population. According to Keston College, there are close to a thousand unregistered mullahs working in the Tadzhik SSR as opposed to fewer than twenty with official permission.[7]

"Gorbachev has ordered a frontal assault on Islam," wrote a Rand analyst,[8] and arrest figures for Muslim activists, compiled by Keston College, would seem to bear him out: from 2 in 1985, to 10 in 1986, and 15 in 1987. These activists have been accused by the chief of the Tadzhikistan KGB of attempting to infiltrate the party, government and law enforcement agencies.

There is also "a methodical effort to divide, co-opt, and tame the Moslem clergy." [9] For instance, an official Muslim clergyman has stated that "there is no contradiction between the Komsomol and religion, no antagonism," a position contrary to Lenin's teaching that party members who attend religious service should be expelled. Soviet policy in Central Asia, however, has long tried to make practical accommodations with local beliefs and local elites, and, until the Alma Ata "events," had appeared to be buying time and peace.

Armenia

Until much more recently, a similar modus vivendi had also kept the political surface of Soviet Armenia nearly unroiled. Left alone with their own ancient Christian culture, able to maintain relatively easy contact with friends and family in the diaspora in the West, the 3 million or so Soviet Armenians voiced and seemed to feel far deeper historical grievances against Turks across the border than against their neighbors or masters inside the U.S.S.R.

Except for several protests in 1987 against environmental pollution in the area around Yerevan, the Republic appeared calm about its circumstances and its leaders, even party chief Karen Demirchyan, whose alleged tolerance for corruption drew attacks from Gorbachev but support in the Armenian Party hierarchy.[10]

Beginning on February 22, 1988, that tranquility evaporated. Demonstrators estimated in the hundreds of thousands marched peacefully but persistently for four days in a row in Yerevan, the swelling crowds demanding the inclusion in the Armenian SSR of the nearby Azerbaijan-administered territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, an enclave roughly the size of Long Island. Moscow had promised to unite the two in 1923, three years after Soviet authority was established in Armenia, but never implemented the pledge.

The protest erupted after the small region's legislature — directly defying a Central Committee injunction from Moscow — voted 110-7, with 13 abstentions on February 20 for reunification with Armenia.[11] Only the day after his radio appeal for "civic maturity and restraint" on February 25 left the Yerevan crowds unmoved, did Gorbachev receive two Armenian intellectuals — journalist Zori Balayan and poet Silva Kaputikyan — as the protesters' emissaries in his Moscow office. Promising to take personal responsibility for finding a solution — but giving no promise as to what it would be — he showed sympathy for their complaints about the lack of Armenian-language television and textbooks in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Returning to Yerevan the same day, Mr. Balayan told the crowd of some half million demonstrators, "Mikhail Sergeyevich understands." Hearing that message, the protesters voted to disband, but their leaders pledged to gather again on March 26 to weigh the more substantive answer they insisted on having from Moscow.[12]

The hint of concessions to Armenians, however, apparently sent Azeris on a rampage in the industrial city of Sumgait, 22 miles north of Baku, on February 28. According to a TASS report of March 21, the violence left 32 dead and 197 hurt, including about 100 policemen. Unofficial sources say the toll is higher and allege that the "pogrom" included mutilation and rapes of Armenian women.[13]

The conflict left the Kremlin only hard choices. A week before the Armenians' deadline, the message from Moscow as relayed by *Pravda* was negative. To redraw the boundaries to put Nagorno-Karabakh inside Armenia, the party organ said, would be to "break the established mechanism." Continuing, it raised questions Soviet leaders have long dreaded:

> What if the rest of the regions, at the expense of other peoples, set out to satisfy their own interests in this fashion? What will happen to the union of brotherly nations, to the economy of the country? As we see, the "noble" idea of "reunification," has an obvious anti-socialist flavor [14]

Moscow ultimately refused the demand for Nagorno-Karabakh's annexation to Armenia, but produced a $670 million package of measures intended to raise social and cultural standards for the Armenian majority in Nagorno-Karabakh. With armed troops patrolling Yerevan's streets in force, the original demonstrators let their March 26 deadline pass without renewed public protests. Many workers in Stepanakert, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, however, staged strikes to protest Moscow's decision

One notable victim of the Armenian events was former political prisoner Paruir Airikyan. As a result of his active dissemination of news concerning the events, he was arrested in late March 1988 and charged with "slander against the Soviet social and political system." His was the first such "political" arrest to come to Western attention since September 1986.

The Baltic States

In the region where nationalist unrest had been most persistent and most consistently repressed in the post-war U.S.S.R., Gorbachevian gestures of tolerance for dissent brought old demands — voiced with impressive new organization — back into the open. The success of protest organizers in rallying public support, however, has also brought a toughening of the official line and a practice that may prove to be a policy: attacking not the sentiment, but its most visible and energetic exponents.

Nationalists in the three Baltic Republics — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, all of which were incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940 as part of Stalin's bargain with Hitler — gained a new lease on life in 1986 when the Kremlin quietly released 23 political prisoners. Punished for earlier activities in support of the separate identities and cultures of the Baltic States, several of them put their freedom promptly to the service of their original causes. In Latvia, the formation of a group calling itself "Helsinki '86" led within months to a massive, peaceful demonstration in Riga and to unprecedented coordination among Baltic nationalist leaders in planning subsequent rallies and in uniting behind a call for full disclosure of the history of their nations' annexation by the Soviet Union.[15]

Roland Silaraups, one of the recently released political prisoners, played a major role in organizing a peaceful demonstration in Riga on June 14, 1987 to commemorate the 46th anniversary of Stalin's deportation of thousands of Latvians to Siberia. At this first organized mass demonstration since World War II against Soviet rule in the Baltics, an estimated 5,000 demonstrators and bystanders gathered to place flowers at Riga's Monument of Freedom and to hear speakers denounce Stalin's crimes. The demonstration was allowed to proceed with a minimum of police interference.

The Riga demonstrations seemed to energize Latvia's neighbors. Estonian activist and former political prisoner Tiit Madisson told a Helsinki Commission hearing on October 6, 1987 that the events in Riga "were like a torch which helped flame sentiments throughout the Baltic."

Similar protests followed in all three Baltic capitals on the anniversary of the Molotov Ribbentrop Pact, August 23; again in Riga on November 14, Latvian Independence Day; in Vilnius on Lithuanian Independence Day, February 16, 1988 and in Tallinn on Estonian Independence Day, February 24. Smaller demonstrations also took place in outlying towns and cities. But the authorities' response had toughened since June 14. In Lithuania and Latvia, massive displays of police and auxiliary police power, plus pro-government "counter demonstrations" kept nationalist sympathizers off the streets.[16]

Particularly outside the capitals, police have used force against the activists. They drove several prominent organizers of the August 23 Vilnius demonstrations out of town, leaving them in the countryside with threats of future physical retribution. The Estonian Independence Day demonstrations were allowed to take place, but many activists, particularly those involved in forming an independent Estonian political party, have been forced to emigrate, as has about half the original membership of "Helsinki '86."[17] Another means of dealing with less active, but potential demonstrators has been to threaten them with loss of jobs or expulsion from school. At least seven activists have been called up for military reserve duty; two of them were jailed for refusing to report and a third was forced to emigrate. In Riga and Tallinn, large numbers of school children between the ages of 14 and 18 were packed off to the country for a week to keep them apart from the demonstrations.[18]

There are reports of Lithuanians serving up to 15 days in jail for their part in the Independence Day events on February 16, 1988. Two months earlier members of the Vilnius City Council had told Commission staff members, "We'll take a look at it," if anyone applied for permission to demonstrate on Independence Day. Subsequently, members of the Vilnius dissident community reported to the same staff members that police had already been around warning potential participants to stay away.

Accepting a measure of nationalist sentiment as its own, the central press has criticized Russians who settle in the Baltics and refuse to learn the native language. There have also been calls to fill in the "blank spots" in Baltic history, so as not to provide ammunition for the "bourgeois nationalist reactionaries" abroad. A top Latvian editor has said of the 1939 Stalin-Hitler Accord: "We

are for publication of it (the pact); it would remove a lot of this needless talk." [19]

Russian Nationalists

Under Gorbachev, the talk of Russian nationalists has been strident. Riding a mainstream current of patriotic sentiment in favor of historic preservation, fidelity to Russian culture and a more balanced view of the Czarist past, a right-wing group called "Pamyat" has won remarkable public support and official tolerance in Moscow and Leningrad.

Its leader is openly anti-Semitic. Official commentators have linked his views to those of the early 20th-Century Black Hundreds, instigators and executors of savage pogroms. But despite clear opposition from liberal officials high in the Central Committee and the press, Pamyat appears to flourish as the dark side of the Slavophile school in which many distinguished writers as well as political and military figures have also found a home. Originally founded by Ministry of Aircraft Production, workers whose enthusiasm for restoring run-down churches, graveyards and other monuments was widely shared, Pamyat has changed since Dmitri Vasiliev, a Muscovite, a writer-photographer and a charismatic speaker, became its head. In speeches (often taped and disseminated widely through an informal network of supporters) to large audiences in premises provided by party and other official agencies, Vasiliev praises Gorbachev, *perestroika* and Russia.

But citing the long-discredited *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, he denounces:

> A satanic conspiracy of Freemasons and Zionists . . . afoot to destroy our sacred country, its culture, all that is dear to us. . . . Unless we unite and smash these evil forces now — for there is very little time left — it will be the end of our people and our fatherland.
>
> Do you know that sinister forces are rebuilding our holy capital in such a way that the main streets will constitute a Star of David? Do you know that the satanic forces want to make Russia a nation of alcoholics? But no one ever told you of the Judeo-Masonic plot to prepare our children for a life of debauchery. For the yogurt they are given every day contains not less than 1.5 percent alcohol . . . [20]

If Pamyat's chief spokesman is on the lunatic fringe, the organization's supporters are not. Numerous enough to stage a march through central Moscow in mid-1987 that ended with the leaders being officially received by the city party's then-First Secretary, Boris Yeltsin, they have also been able to meet in the headquarters of the Leningrad Region Party Committee and to link themselves effectively to officially sanctioned drives for restoring monuments of Russian culture and giving old Russian placenames back to locales that had carried post-revolutionary, Communist honorifics.

Neither as extreme as Vasiliev nor openly dissident, like the exiled Solzhenitsyn, a number of respected Russian nationalist writers have written oblique criticism of Soviet policy as a destructive influence on traditional Russian values and culture. Theirs is the "benign" Russian nationalism dedicated to the restoration of Russian national heritage and spiritual values.

Because Russian nationalism itself can mean different things to different people, the Kremlin's attitude toward it is difficult to ascertain. Alexander Yakovlev, a Politburo member with close ties to Gorbachev, is on record as sharply criticizing Russian nationalism.

Yet there is little doubt that Russian nationalist grievances get a sympathetic hearing from some leading party figures. The August 1986 Politburo decision to scotch the project to turn northern Russian rivers southward was probably not occasioned only by wiser economic judgments, but also by the protests of leading Russian writers against the havoc the scheme would wreak on ancestral northern Russian lands. In the past year, as well, certain street names in Moscow have regained their pre-revolutionary designations and the city of Izhevsk, briefly Ustinov, after the late Soviet Defense Minister, has had its good name restored.

As for Pamyat, though under attack in the press, it has had more leeway than similar nationalist groups would get in other areas, a policy that lead one observer to ask:

> If similar organizations were to be set up, for example, in Lithuania, Ukraine, or Armenia, that linked nationalism with idolatry of pre-revolutionary heroes, would they be given space in party buildings for their meetings and highly publicized interviews with top party officials? Hardly likely.[21]

Other Nationalities and Minorities

Glasnost has brought grievances of other national groups — the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews, for example — a new measure of public attention. Only on marginal issues, however, has Gorbachev given their demands much satisfaction. Whatever broad new Soviet policy is to be developed on the nationality issue, it will have to be exceptionally elastic to accommodate the full range of concerns that these nations and minorities have long voiced, long in vain.

CRIMEAN TATARS: In the summer of 1987, Crimean Tatars resumed agitation for their right to return to the ancestral homeland from which Stalin expelled them in 1945 for alleged treason during World War II. In Moscow and areas of Central Asia to which they had been exiled, the Tatars renewed the demonstrations they had begun as early as 1956, pressing the campaign that makes theirs the first open dissident movement in the Soviet Union.

After extraordinary public rallies outside the walls of the Kremlin, Soviet authorities agreed to establish a nationwide commission, with local affiliates in Central Asia, under the chairmanship of Council of Ministers President Andrei Gromyko to "examine" the Tatars' demands. The Commission eventually mandated new measures to "promote the culture of Crimean Tatars," but did not resolve the major issue: resettlement in Crimea for all who desire to do so. In March 1988, the Commission ruled that Crimean Tatars who were "the most virtuous and proved in work and social life" would be allowed to return to the homeland, a move condemned as inadequate by Crimean Tatar activists.[22] Meanwhile, a Crimean Tatar representative in the West claimed that Moscow plans to move 500,000 Slavic settlers into the Crimea, possibly as a result of predicted unemployment among unneeded workers in the Russian Republic.[23]

UKRAINE: The perennial issue of Russification in the Ukraine, touched on by Ukrainian writers at the January 1987 plenum of the All-Union Writers' Union in Moscow, has continued to gain momentum in literary and party circles. On the first anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, the Kiev University Komsomol

distributed a leaflet addressed to citizens of Kiev attacking local party officials for being unresponsive to the peoples' needs.[24]

This "official" protest has been paralleled by the formation of an unofficial Ukrainian Culturological Club devoted to the preservation of Ukrainian history and culture. Criticized in the official press, the club was expelled from the Government-owned premises in which it had been meeting. Newspapers, however, have printed letters in support of the group, including one by Oksana Meshko, an elderly activist with a long history of labor camps and exile. In contrast, three other prominent Ukrainian nationalists were prevented from attending the independent Moscow human rights seminar in December 1987, and some of Ukraine's most renowned political prisoners still remain at Perm Camp No. 35 — having been tranferred there from the notorious Perm Camp No. 36-1 in December 1987.

BELORUSSIA: The normally quiescent Belorussians have also become more assertive on national issues. As early as 1986, 28 Belorussian cultural figures wrote to Gorbachev, proposing a series of measures designed to preserve their culture and language. One hundred and thirty-four nonliterary activists followed with a similar letter in June 1987. On November 1, 1987, a demonstration in Minsk, allegedly organized to revive a Belorussian tradition of honoring the dead, produced various nationalist complaints against Soviet repression. And a month later, representatives of about 30 unofficial Belorussian youth groups met to discuss history, cultural, and language issues.[25] While tolerated, so far, such nationalist activities have begun to be criticized in the official press.

JEWS: There have been symbolic shifts in official attitudes toward Jewish cultural activists. The Soviet press has become more attentive to Jewish contributions to society and has given increased coverage to Jewish theaters, dance troupes, etc. During a visit to the United States in August 1987, Rabbi Adolf Shayevich of the Moscow Choral Synagogue, known for his public fealty to the Kremlin line, stated that teaching Hebrew would be permitted under the new law on self-employment. At least one private course had been set up with official blessing in Baku, Azerbaijan,[26] but there are reports that this course has been closed down by city authorities.

A private Jewish library and a Jewish museum have also been established in Moscow, and certain Jewish literature has been permitted for import. The newly-opened kosher restaurant at the Choral Synagogue, however, is reportedly open only to tourists and synagogue staff. A well-known former refusenik told Commission staffers in April 1988, that he believes the Government is seriously attempting to reduce anti-Semitism — admission for Jewish applicants to institutes of higher learning is much easier, for instance, but that *glasnost* has led to greater manifestations of anti-Semitism "from below."

OTHER AREAS: The Soviet press has recently reported serious ethnic disturbances in one of the most under-publicized areas of the Soviet Union, Moldavia, but little information directly from that area is available.[27] On a peaceable note, the Kazakh Central Committee published resolutions in March 1987, calling for the improvement of both Russian and Kazakh language instruction.

There have also been some concessions to the status of local languages in schools in Moldavia and Buryatia, as well as calls for the same in the Kirghizian press. In Georgia, human rights activists have formed an organization named after the martyred Georgian poet Ilia Chavchavadze to press for more cultural and religious concessions.

The Nationality Dilemma

The rise in national consciousness and its various public expressions have forced Gorbachev to address the issue. In his address to the February 18, 1988 party plenum (called to discuss education issues) Gorbachev referred to the nationality issue as the "vital, fundamental" issue of society and suggested that a future party plenum be devoted to the issue. Earlier, the issue had not been high on the agenda, although various party spokesman had gradually begun to address the issue more frankly and to recognize the dangers of ignoring long-festering complaints. In his November 2, 1987 speech commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the General Secretary said:

> (The party) must be exceedingly attentive and tactful in everything touching the national interests or national feelings of people and ensure the most active participation of the toilers of all nations and nationalities in the solution of the diverse tasks in the life of our multinational society
>
> If we encounter signs of legitimate discontent or protest, we shall seriously get down primarily to the root causes of such phenomena. Administrative zeal will be of no help in this respect . . .[28]

Thus far, the reluctance to resort to "administrative zeal" has meant that, with the exception of the Alma Ata rioters, only one nationalist dissident — Armenian Paruir Airikyan — has been arrested and tried for participating in nationalist activities. Only in the Baltic States have some activists been forced to emigrate or recalled for military reserve duty and prosecuted when they refused. After the remarkable Armenian protests, Gorbachev and his policymakers must recognize that nationalist concerns — whether old grievances or new, whether over language and culture or money and land — are emerging as major obstacles to internal Soviet harmony, political unity and economic productivity.

FOOTNOTES

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PROFESSING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

When General Secretary Gorbachev demanded a "decisive and uncompromising struggle against manifestations of religion and a strengthening of political work with the masses and of atheist propaganda,"[1] during a November 24, 1986 speech in Tashkent, some feared a new wave of religious repression in the making. It did not materialize. Soviet spokesmen later told Commission staffers that Gorbachev's rhetoric "was just for party members, anyway."

When he spoke to the nation at large through televised coverage of a Kremlin reception in late April 1988 for the top hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, Gorbachev struck a dramatically more tolerant note:

> Believers are Soviet people, workers, patriots, and they have the full right to express their conviction with dignity. *Perestroika* and democratization concern them too — in full measure and without any restrictions.

In his statement of welcome to the clergymen, as read by Soviet newscasters, Gorbachev appeared to promise new policies toward religion that would assure at least the Orthodox Church the right "to carry out its activity without any outside interference."[2]

Although that right has not been put into law, practice in certain areas of the Soviet Union has already produced an improved situation for believers.

An American correspondent reported early in 1988:

> Religious activists, many of whom have been released from prison or exile over the last year, agree that authorities have a more tolerant attitude.[3]

And Ambassador Richard Schifter, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, told a State Department audience on May 14, 1987:

> The restrictions seem to be relaxing for those religious groups willing to obey the regulations.

Gorbachev has spoken infrequently about religion, and his call at the 27th Party Congress in February 1987 for ". . . more creative initiatives and activity . . . against clerical anti-Sovietism"[4] suggests a retreat from all-out attacks on individual faith, which does not challenge the authority of the Soviet state. The difference between not attacking religion and tolerating vigorous, free, religious expression, however, is significant. Soviet authorities have not proved they intend to take the second step.

Official Attitudes

The Soviet press and official spokesmen have shown a recent willingness to criticize past attitudes and policies and to suggest that change is in the offing. Yuri Smirnov, head of the internation-

al department of the All-Union Council for Religious Affairs, for instance, said early in 1988:

> Previous leaders tried to force the masses away from religion. In practice, much has changed. The needs of believers, the church in our country, are being regarded more calmly and attentively.[5]

And during an August 1987 U.S. visit, Konstantin Kharchev, Council chairman, admitted that in the past believers had been "rudely treated." Under Gorbachev, he claimed, this practice was being corrected. [6] In the fall of 1987, Cultural Fund chairman Dmitri Likhachev also publicly criticized the Government's interference with the church and the limitations placed on the production of religious literature.[7]

Not only *Moscow News*, largely for Western readers, but also *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, and *Izvestiya* have publicized mistreatment of Soviet believers attempting to register their churches. The tone of such commentary is not new. In August 1965, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* carried an article by a G. Kelt, warning:

> Today we are deceiving ourselves again. . . . It is true that there are no churches and no ministers in large parts of the Soviet Union. But there are believers. . . . Where do they come from? From the ranks of those who leave the church . . . closing a parish does not make atheists of believers. On the contrary, it strengthens the attraction of religion for people and it embitters their hearts besides.[8]

One dramatic change in official attitudes is the new visibility — including appearances on Soviet television — of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy. During the 1988 Russian Orthodox Easter celebrations, Soviet television broadcast part of the service from the Epiphany Cathedral in Moscow — at 3 a.m. without prior notice — in what is believed to be the first Soviet religious telecast.[9] Such exposure can be seen as an attempt to co-opt the 1988 celebrations of the Millenium of Christianity in Kievan Rus' and as a reward to the Orthodox hierarchy that faithfully tows the party line in public statements on peace, human rights and religious freedom. Nevertheless, the treatment is a marked change from the pre-Gorbachev era when Soviet clerics were virtual nonpersons in the official media.

Legal Status and Criminal Penalties

Soviet legal restrictions on religious practices originate in legislation adopted under Lenin, intensified under Stalin and amended over the years. While Yuri Smirnov claimed that "the Government is preparing to amend the laws that limit organized religion," he added that, "it is too early to discuss what changes might be made."[10] According to a recently emigrated Russian Orthodox priest, one person who has seen the new draft legislation on religion — rumored to be awaiting official promulgation — told members of the Moscow International Society for Human Rights that "it hardly varies from the old legislation."[11]

One putative change has been to grant "juridical personage" to registered churches, a move reported in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in January 1986. At least one representative of the Council on Religious Affairs, however, has stated that "to a certain degree" religious congregations were granted the right to legal entity in 1946, and that status was allegedly reaffirmed in 1957.[12]

Another new practice drops the requirement that baptisms be registered with local councils on religious affairs. Unless and until new legislation alters them, however, criminal codes in the Soviet Republics will continue to outlaw religious education in Sunday schools and provide sanctions against "infringement of the laws on separation of the church from the state and of the school from the church" and "infringement upon the person and rights of citizens in the guise of performing religious rites." In the past, believers were also sentenced on charges of "slander" or "being occupied in illegal enterprises," i.e., printing Bibles and other religious literature.

A special edict by the Supreme Soviet in February 1987, and an amnesty in June 1987, to mark the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, though not addressed directly to imprisoned believers, significantly reduced the number of known religious prisoners, from 411, as reported by Keston College in early 1986, to approximately 240 in February 1988. The total number of known Christian prisoners dropped from 338 to 153. Approximately 30 of the latter are Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced for refusing to serve in the armed forces. The 90-odd non-Christians are Hare Krishnas and Muslims.

Analysis of the known arrests for the period 1985-1987 shows that while the latter groups have suffered increased arrests and jailings, overt persecution of more traditional religious organizations has relaxed. From the beginning of 1987, when approximately 125 Baptists were imprisoned, their number has declined to 38. Some of those still in the camps, however, are older pastors in poor health after repeated sentences.

Religious Communities and Instruction

In early 1987, both the Pentecostal and Seventh-Day Adventist communities recorded "firsts" in their Soviet history — the opening of a registered Pentecostal Church in Moscow and of a seminary for the officially recognized Adventists.[13]

Statistics on the registration of new churches remained imprecise and must be interpreted in light of the fact that registration itself does not necessarily insure a community decent premises in which to worship.

In the November 1987 issue of *Nauka i Religia* (Science and Religion), Council Chairman Kharchev claimed that there are 6,794 registered Russian Orthodox communities (down from the 1981 total of 7,007.) In contrast, the weekly *Ukraina* of July 1987, gave the figure as 8,500. Kharchev also counted almost 3,000 Evangelical Christian-Baptist communities; *Ukraina* reported "over 2,000." Keston College, however, has pointed out that the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (AUCECB) previously claimed over 5,000.[14]

During recent discussions in the Soviet Union with Helsinki Commission staffers, a former Russian Orthodox priest indicated that receiving permission to register an Orthodox Church in the area he was familiar with, Western Siberia, was easier than in other parts of the U.S.S.R. — in part because religious council officials had so much trouble with Evangelical Christians that they were willing to cooperate with the Russian Orthodox.

Yet another reason, he said, was that Siberian officials themselves were younger and more liberal in their attitudes. Other analysts believe that Soviet authorities prefer to register Baptist communities, fearing that refusal may drive the believers into illegal groups.

During the Moscow independent human rights seminar in December 1987, some participants described bitter feuds with local officials over opening Russian Orthodox Churches. One man from the Donbass region of the RSFSR reported that his Russian Orthodox congregation had received written permission to open a church from the All-Union Council, only to be thwarted by local authorities. In Georgia, according to dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia, at least 16 Georgian Orthodox communities have been groundlessly refused permission to register. [15]

Nor does the opening of the first Adventist seminary in 57 years alter the long-standing principle of careful control over entrance to seminaries and theological institutions. The numbers are kept low, and candidates are frequently admitted on the basis of their "reliability" rather than spiritual qualifications.

A contentious, perennial problem for ordinary believers — the supply of Bibles — has been somewhat alleviated under Gorbachev. The All-Union Council of Evangelical Baptists and Christians, for example, received 10,000 copies of the Bible and 10,000 hymn books in Russian in June 1987 through the combined efforts of the United Bible Society and the Mission Light of the Federal Republic of Germany. As a result, there is now a small supply of Bibles available for purchase at the Moscow Baptist Church at a cost of 30 rubles each (about $45 U.S. at the official exchange rate.) Another 100,000 Bibles are scheduled to be delivered in 1988, along with 10,000 in German, and 8,000 in Moldavian. The Russian Orthodox Church has obtained permission to print 100,000 Bibles, and Keston College reported that the United Bible Society has also sent a shipment of paper and printing equipment to the Georgian Orthodox Church to produce 10,000 Bibles in Georgian.

On March 22, 1988, Vladimir Solodin, chairman of an official committee assigned to review books that had been previously banned, announced that the general Soviet public would be permitted to own Bibles and other religious literature which was not "anti-Government." [16]

Religion and National Identity

In his 27th Party Congress remarks about combating "anti-Soviet clericalism," Gorbachev also used familiar terms to urge more "efforts to overcome the vestiges of religion and nationalism." The problems presented by religious denominations that are historically associated with the national cultures of non-Russian minorities have frustrated the Soviet Government throughout its history. Gorbachev's policies in this respect are different only to the degree that they may be bringing such issues to the surface of Soviet politics.

Probably the best example of past official conduct is the treatment of the Ukrainian Eastern-rite Catholic Church, forcibly joined to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1946 at an illegal synod in Lvov. In August 1987, an open appeal to Pope John Paul II from

two bishops, 35 clergy and 174 laity in Ukraine sought aid in security legalization for the Ukrainian Catholic Church; in February 1988, a similar appeal to the Supreme Soviet was signed by over 5,000 persons. For 40 years the official line was that the church does not exist and those who claim to be its adherents are simply purveyors of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. Since the fall of 1987, however, mixed signals have suggested that old policies may be under reexamination. A supplement to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, "Sobesednik," for instance, published a "challenge" by a Ukrainian Catholic to debate the issue of religious faith with a Komsomol member.[17]

In November 1987, Radio Liberty reported contacts between Soviet officials and representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church to discuss the legalization of the church. Ukrainian activist and exile Joseph Terelya said he was "fairly optimistic" that the Kremlin will move on legalization.[18]

At a human rights meeting in Venice, Italy in February 1988, however, the Archbishop of Pskov reverted to form: "We have no Uniates, and the people want nothing to do with them."[19] Nevertheless, a group of Ukrainian Catholics from Chicago was reportedly invited by a Russian Orthodox prelate in early 1988 to celebrate an Eastern-rite Mass at a church in Ivano-Frankovsk in Western Ukraine.[20]

Reports from the Baltic States, where the Lithuanian Catholic Church has historically been a carrier and symbol of nationalist feelings, are similarly mixed. In July 1987, Lithuanian authorities answered years of petitions by thousands of Catholics by announcing their intention to return Our Lady Queen of Peace Church to the parishioners of Klaipeda in 1989, 28 years after authorities seized it. A month later, the chaplain of a major Vilnius church told a United Press correspondent:

> Attendance is increasing. It is most definitely on the increase. There are more younger people and families . . . generally, we do not feel the pressure from the Government that we used to in the past.

The same priest, an ethnic Pole, noted that "Polish priests have flocked to Lithuania to help administer to the spiritual needs of its Catholics."[21]

While it is difficult to imagine priests of any faith "flocking" to an area of the Soviet Union, the introduction of Polish clergy to fill the places of an older generation of Lithuanian priests could combine with the strict ceiling of 30 new entrants per year to the seminary in Kaunas to help the Kremlin subtly distance Lithuanian priests from the ethnic roots of their flock.

Catholic dissidents and a priest who had recently spent time in labor camp for his religious activities told Helsinki Commission staffers that the vast majority of the clergy remains afraid of offending secular authorities. A priest who demonstrates independence, they said, can count on being refused a permanent position in any parish.

The Latvian Lutheran Church, at one time the nation's predominant religious faith, has seen its hierarchy crack down on members of the reform-minded "Renaissance and Renewal" group and the

Roman Catholic Church, step into the vacuum to acquire the largest following in present-day Latvia.[22]

Two members of "Renaissance and Renewal" told a Helsinki Commission staffer in Riga that "the mission of the Lutheran hierarchy in Latvia is to travel abroad and to extinguish the church quietly." The Latvian hierarchy, they reported, has removed activist ministers who were bringing more people back to the churches from the parishes and has relieved them from positions at the theological institute. According to Keston College, however, one of the major figures in "Renaissance and Renewal," Pastor Modris Plate, has been restored to his pastorate. [23]

Hare Krishna Movement

When Religious Affairs Council chairman Kharchev provided *Nauka i Religia* in November 1987, with his statistics on the numbers of Soviet believers in the various faiths, he made no mention of the Hare Krishna movement. This hard-to-define, quasi-religious philosophy is still a tiny fringe group. According to representatives abroad, it has grown to include at least 200 fully initiated members and over 10,000 practitioners since it was introduced into the Soviet Union in 1971.

The first two years under Gorbachev were difficult. Arrests doubled from 6 in 1985 to 12 in 1986. None, however, were reported in 1987, and Anatoly Pinyaev, the founder of the movement in the Soviet Union, was released from a special psychiatric hospital last December after four years of incarceration. Some Hare Krishna representatives, by contrast, were invited earlier in 1987 to discuss registration of the group with the Council on Religious Affairs, but the talk has not led to any reported further action. The application for registration in 1986 by Hare Krishnas in Riga, Latvia was rejected by the local council on the grounds that "(their) views on dietary practices and performance of yogi exercises may not serve as a reason for registration as a religious group."[24]

Approximately six devotees are still believed held in labor camps or psychiatric hospitals, and one died in labor camp in December 1987. The sect is most visible in Moscow. During USSR-India month in July 1987, orange-robed believers could be seen in the capital staging their gatherings or "kirtanas" on the streets, handing out nuts and sweets to crowds observing discussions between a delegation of the International Helsinki Federation and the Soviet Human Rights Commission.[25]

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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

A right most Westerners take for granted, the freedom to travel abroad is a privilege the Soviet state grants or denies its citizens, requiring them, in either case, to go through an arduous application procedure involving submission of numerous documents to an Office of Visas and Registration (OVIR), a section of the Ministry of Interior. According to a recent issue of *Izvestiya*, it is no longer necessary to submit applications to one's place of employment or educational institution in order to travel to the West for a visit or for permanent emigration.[1] Refuseniks are quick to point out, however, that following submission of the required documents, the KGB will make the necessary inquiries at the workplace or educational institution.

In theory, only Jews, Armenians and Germans are allowed to "repatriate" to their respective homelands or reunite with families abroad. Occasionally, dissidents or members of other nationalities are allowed or forced to leave. Although emigration increased considerably in 1987 over previous years, the flow has come nowhere near the levels of the late 1970's. Entry and exit visa totals for temporary visits to and from the Soviet Union, however, rose significantly, particularly in 1987, and *Pravda*, noting continuing Western criticism of Soviet emigration restrictions, wrote on January 25, 1988:

> . . . although we have overtaken the West in many spheres . . . international propaganda has managed to fudge over our general picture of accomplishments as a result of insufficiently justified bars to leaving the country. . . .

Those "bars" tighten or relax in accordance with high-level political decisions, rather than the formal regulations for entering and leaving the Soviet Union promulgated by the Supreme Soviet on September 20, 1970, or the "clarified" regulations that went into effect on January 1, 1987. Those new rules limit emigration for family reunification to instances where a Soviet applicant seeks to rejoin, "a husband, a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or a sister." Despite fears that Soviet authorities might release only those who fit the family relations stipulations, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry's year-end survey found that in 1987:

> There is some easing of the first-degree family restriction as a requirement for invitations to leave. Indeed, in some cities, from 25 to 30 percent of the new applicants did not have such invitations.

Soviet refuseniks, however, have informed the Commission that in January 1988, at least some OVIRs interpreted the rules strictly, accepting applications only from first degree relatives. During the Shevardnadze visit to Washington in late March 1988, administration officials received assurances from the Soviets that the latter will "liberally" interpret emigration regulations once again.

The year 1987 did see large numbers of Soviet Armenians allowed to leave the Soviet Union — 3,200, compared to 88 in 1985 and 197 in 1986. There has also been a huge increase in the number of Soviet Germans going to the Federal Republic of Germany — 14,888, compared to 460 and 698 in the two previous years. And Jewish emigration figures have risen from 1,140 in 1985, 914 in 1986 to 8,155 last year. The totals for the first quarter of 1988 are 2,396. The statistics are encouraging, but they reflect changed tactics under Gorbachev, not institutional or legalized reforms that might survive if he does not.

State Secrets

The Soviet practice of denying applicants with supposed knowledge of "state secrets" permission for them or their family members to emigrate has been and continues to be applied in an unpredictable manner. For the first time, the clarified regulations of January 1987, at least provide a formal statement — a possible ground for seeking reversal of a low-level denial — that an individual may not be permitted to leave "if he is privy to state secrets or if there are other reasons involving state security."[2]

The practice of denying emigration due to a relatives' alleged possession of state secrets appeared to increase beginning in 1987. In some recent cases, applicants who are refused on "state secrets" grounds, are being told to "go through their lists of relatives because maybe someone in their family had access to secrets," the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews reported on January 28, 1988. During the preceding week, several long-term refuseniks from Moscow received word from OVIR that their secrecy status would not be reinvestigated "as long as they have no close relatives outside the country."

In addition, at least the OVIR in Odessa is now demanding documents from military authorities if the applicants have draft-age sons.

In one positive development, at least three long-time refuseniks who had been mentioned in *Vechernaya Moskva*, on February 12, 1987 [3] as being permanently ineligible for emigration on "state secrets" grounds, did, in fact, eventually receive permission. In addition, a special commission has been established in the Supreme Soviet to make final decisions on disputed security denials. Its workings are still unclear, but the applications of some refuseniks previously denied on security grounds have supposedly been approved on the basis of the commission's decision.

In response to a question on emigration during his televised interview with NBC news in December 1987, Gorbachev has also resurrected an issue that had not been raised for several years: that of emigration as a dangerous "brain drain" out of the Soviet Union. Picked up in the Soviet press, his justification for limiting freedom of movement was repeated a few weeks later by a representative of the U.S.S.R. Friendship Society during discussions with Helsinki Commission staffers and during a "U.S.-U.S.S.R. Citizens Summit" in Alexandria, Virginia in February 1988.

Statistically, the brightest spot in the area of travel from the Soviet Union is that of divided spouses and blocked marriages. At the time of the November 1985 Reagan-Gorbachev summit in

Geneva, there were approximately 20 such problem cases. The number is now down to five.

Family Visits, Travel

Because the U.S. Government does not generally monitor the movements of its citizens or permanent resident aliens, exact statistics on the number of them who have been issued visas to visit relatives in the Soviet Union, cannot be obtained. Nevertheless, it is clear that visa refusals for such visits have been reduced to a minimum, and in 1987, the Soviet Government reversed its policy of denying entry visas to former Soviet citizens. While emigres report that those who had been imprisoned on political charges since the Stalin era are not being permitted to visit their former homeland, their spouses have been allowed in.

In reporting on Soviet citizens allowed to visit family members in the United States, the U.S. State Department described the situation on the eve of Gorbachev's ascent to power:

> In general, few Soviet citizens are granted exit permission to visit relatives in the United States. Most are retired and have family members in the United States. . . .
>
> During the period October 1, 1984 — March 1985, the (U.S.) Embassy and consulate general issued U.S. visas to 557 Soviet citizens for private visits [4]

As of October 1987, the Department noted changed conduct:

> Soviet practice in the area of family meetings reflected some of the other liberalizing changes taking place in Soviet society. . . . The number of people who applied for and received visitors visas for private family trips to the United States was more than 2,800 for the April 1 — September 30 reporting period — more than double that figure for the same period in 1986, (1,050). [5]

By the end of 1987, the number of such visas issued for the year had nearly doubled again to 5,764.

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THE FLOW OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS

The most-noticed — because most visible to outside observers — of the changes sponsored by Mikhail Gorbachev in Soviet internal affairs has been the lifting of long-standing restrictions on expression in the media and the arts. Where a time-honored rule of thumb — whatever is not permitted is forbidden — was enforced by formal censorship and powerful sanctions against dissent, journalists, writers, film makers and others have gained new latitude to explore the limits of political and cultural orthodoxy.

Their freedom is far from assured, far from absolute. It advances only by fits and starts, without formal statutory protection. But in taking advantage of the expanded scope for inquiry, comment and self-expression, Soviets are both serving the proclaimed goals of *glasnost* and, some hope, insuring its continuation. Asked by a member of a Washington audience in late 1987 which period was better for writers — the post-Stalin "thaws" or the current *glasnost* — Author Daniil Granin, a 1963 defender of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, replied succinctly: "Now is better. It hasn't ended yet."

Nor did it begin with Gorbachev. *Glasnost* has antecedents in the writings of Lenin. And the concept of free expression, along with respect for law, has been a central aim of Soviet human rights advocates since they emerged as open dissenters in the mid-1960's.

There is more than a little irony in a Communist Party leader's adopting and adapting the rallying cry of democrats his predecessors scorned, jailed, and exiled. But Gorbachev's policy remains far from the genuine openness sought by such men as Andrei Sakharov. Official *glasnost* is more a means than an end in itself.

It is meant to serve the Gorbachev reform agenda by:

* — assisting a political purge. *Glasnost* exposes the public to details of the past errors and misdeeds of officials whom the new party leaders seek to depose.
* — mobilizing reform initiative. Wider public information about what is *wrong* in Soviet society is meant to spur and justify experiments in setting things *right*.
* — educating the Soviet public. By exposing the Soviet population to a wide variety of opinions on social and other issues, *glasnost* sets the stage for bringing Soviet citizens into the information age.
* — releasing stifled creativity. Especially in the field of culture, *glasnost* opens the way both for suppressed talent to emerge and for a fresh examination of Soviet history's darkest episodes.
* — providing accurate reporting to decision makers. In a society pressing modernization but still hobbled by self-deception, correct information is essential at the top, and *glasnost* opens a reporting channel from below.

Auxiliary benefits may come in making the Soviet media more popular and thus decreasing the audience for Western radio broadcasts. Further, *glasnost's* early beneficiaries come from the ranks of the disaffected intelligentsia. To the degree that they gain a stake in Gorbachev's success, they may be not only reintegrated into the society that has often censured the best of them as "internal emigres;" they may also be dissuaded from seeking an audience for their criticism in the West.

Glasnost, however, is no easy instrument to wield. Conservative Soviet spokesmen are trying to define its limits in terms of the service it renders to concrete party aims, not as a free-for-all of free expression. Yet a policy that sanctions a multiplicity of views in a state where only one view can prevail obviously threatens the machinery of party control; it could even endanger party power.

That risk is already apparent. To keep *glasnost* from swelling from a thaw to a deluge, the Soviet regime will likely face ever more difficult choices. As the Nagorno-Karabakh incident has shown — with its hundreds of thousands of Armenian protesters on the streets of Yerevan — *glasnost* carries the risk of opening a Pandora's box of dissent.

MEDIA POLICIES

Background

Since the summer of 1922, the Soviet state has had a national censorship agency under one formal name or another.[1] Known from its first incarnation as *glavlit*, the institution employed at one time as many as 70,000 censors, many of them with offices inside the publishing houses and periodicals they oversaw.

Their guide was a constantly updated tome of some 300 pages: "Index of Information not to be Published in the Open Press," also known informally as the Talmud. Its listing of forbidden topics ranged from domestic food shortages and natural disasters to the mention of discredited leaders such as Trotsky or of *glavlit*, itself.

Always required to submit material to the censors in advance of publication for study periods lasting several days to two weeks, on average, for monthly journals, editors could dispute the censors' verdicts with the censors themselves and bargain for the restoration or revision of disputed material. But even when writing had been cleared with the secret police (KGB), the censors had the last word; they checked printed text against manuscript before giving the go-ahead for the presses to roll.

Knowing the obstacles they faced, the norms the party decreed and the penalties they could suffer in perquisites as well as publication denied, writers and editors most commonly practiced the avoidance mechanism of self-censorship. As effectively as official scrutiny, this practice in literature, film, journalism and the visual arts worked to stifle open dissent and individual creativity.

Various sources, including high-level Soviet officials, claim that under Gorbachev, official censorship has ended and that journalists are now free to tackle any subject. In practice, however, public information must serve the party's goals, advance and applaud its programs.

It is the party that sets the media agenda, one that Givi Pasturia, deputy editor of *Dawn of the East*, the Russian-language newspaper of Soviet Georgia, defined to Helsinki Commission staff members in December 1987, in two ways. Soviet reporters, he said, are no longer barred from once-forbidden zones of investigation. On the other hand, they are adjured to criticize societal shortcomings sharply. *Glasnost*, in short, lifts prohibitions to sanction a new conformity.

As for *glavlit*, its status is unclear. Martin Dewhirst, an authority on Soviet censorship, told the Commission in February 1988, that the agency has a new head, Vladimir Boldyrev — said to have been appointed in early 1987 — and that many former censors have new jobs as librarians. Although most Soviet journalists and cultural figures say they no longer see the once-all-powerful cen-

sors, a scaled-down apparatus for party control apparently still exists.

Gorbachev and Glasnost

Mikhail Gorbachev has long been a Soviet media critic. The press, he complained, was often "guilty of monotony, drabness and superficiality."[2] Within a few weeks of his inaugural pledge to disseminate more news on party work, a *Pravda* editorial in late March 1985 declared:

> Timely and frank release of information is evidence of trust of people, respect for their intelligence and feelings and for their ability to assess events.

For the first six months thereafter, however, the press concentrated on corruption and economic failings,[3] harking back to the campaigns of Yuri Andropov's brief tenure as General Secretary. By the fall of 1985, a wider novelty was apparent in the publication of an interview with President Reagan, of news of domestic natural disasters and, in December, of writer Yevgeny Yevtushenko's call for the publication of long-banned modern Russian classics. Despite Writers' Union head Georgy Markov's criticism of *glasnost* at the February 1986 27th Party Congress,[4] the 1986 press pushed onto new ground with stories on problems of Afghanistan war veterans and the privileges of party membership and with criticism of Stalin as a war leader.

Such advances — spurred by Gorbachev in 27th Party Congress injunctions to raise the "low ideological and artistic level" of some Soviet TV programs, and to mobilize the local press against anti-reform party bosses [5] — have not gone uncontested. In January 1987, Gorbachev made his ally Aleksandr Yakovlev, already Central Committee Secretary for Propaganda, a candidate member of the Politburo.

But six months after Yakovlev, a former Columbia University exchange student and Ambassador to Canada, got the power to push the *glasnost* policies he is credited with devising, [6] a top Soviet editor called for restraint. In a June 1987 speech to the Union of Journalists, *Izvestiya* editor—in—chief Ivan Laptev warned that freedom was leading to articles that presented Soviet history as "a complete error, a kind of historic failure."[7]

Appearing to retrench and revise priorities, Gorbachev put a new spin on his policy in a January 1988 meeting with Soviet media representatives. Where, a year before, he had stressed the need to fill in the blank spaces ("white holes") in Soviet history, he now suggests the press deemphasize historical and sociopolitical themes — Stalinism and its victims, by implication — in favor of a focus on positive examples of the effects of reform on the economy.[8]

Gorbachev's shift in emphasis may herald more far-reaching concessions to Old Guard Party stalwarts. Early evidence suggests, however, it is more a tactical than a strategic retreat. The central press, at least, continued to use *glasnost* at the start of 1988 as a means of exposing old and new corruption. For example, in Uzbekistan, old corruption was exposed when Leonid Brezhnev's son-in-law appeared to be the target of a bribery probe. New corruption was the focus when a Brezhnev secretary was convicted of taking bribes, a Ukrainian KGB official was charged with brutality, and

Armenian Party and police were accused of taking payoffs for protecting illegal conduct[9]. On anti-Stalinism, a play published in the January issue of *Znamya* goes significantly farther than Gorbachev has in denouncing the onetime dictator. It accuses Stalin of murdering the Leningrad Party chief Sergei Kirov in 1936 and has Vladimir Lenin call himself "guilty before the workers of Russia" for not ousting Stalin in time.[10] A clear setback for *glasnost*, however, was an October 1987 Council of Ministers order disclosed in February 1988, to halt the work of independent publishing cooperatives.[11] Such cooperatives had already printed some books in Latvia and Estonia, but were closed by Moscow's order in 1987. The Soviet Government clearly did not want to relinquish its total control over official printing presses in the U.S.S.R.

Debating History

The issue of Stalin's place in Soviet history -- and press and textbooks — is a question that both media and party have tentatively reopened. Two years before a party commission's formal rehabilitation in February 1988 of Nikolai Bukharin, among the most prominent of Stalin's victims, Mikhail Gorbachev was on record as seeing no need to reexamine the past.[12]

His 1986 contention that Stalinism was a bogus issue, invented by enemies of socialism, gave way to a Central Committee Plenum decision in January 1987, that, as one analyst said, "in order to introduce change in the current system, the present leadership must disassociate itself from the Stalinist past."[13] By July of that year, Gorbachev was saying:

> I think we never will be able to forgive or justify what happened in 1937-38 (Stalin's Terror) and never should.[14]

In between the plenum and that statement, however, top party ideologist, Yegor Ligachev, weighed in with an effort to set limits on de-Stalinization. Soviet history, he said, should not be seen as "a chain of errors" and Stalin should be credited with having "put the Soviet Union on the map as a leading industrial power."[15] When Gorbachev came to give an authoritative discourse on his nation's history to a November 1987 observance of the Revolution's 70th anniversary, he was circumspect. Stalin had been right to crush the Trotsky-Bukharin opposition, he held, but his methods were brutal. Portraying Stalin's opponents as misguided rather than villainous, Gorbachev placated the dictator's admirers by refering to thousands of victims rather than the millions numbered by most Western and some dissenting Soviet historians.

With signals from the top so uncertain, the Soviet press has divided views. Defending Stalin and Stalinism are such journals as *Zvezda* (Star), *Molodaya Gvardia* (Young Guard), *Moskva* (Moscow) and *Literaturnaya Rossia* (Literary Russia). Most Soviet journals — *Druzhba Narodov* (Friendship of the Peoples), *Znamya* (Banner), *Novy Mir* (New World) and *Yunost* (Youth) — see black horror in the "white holes" of the past.[16]

Early in 1987, for instance, *Ogonyok* (Little Fire), a liberal journal, ran graphic articles on Stalin's purge of the Red Army elite. A number of other periodicals carried criticism of Stalin's wartime

leadership or attacked his policies of economic centralization, agricultural collectivization and scientific and cultural dictatorship.

Some published writing has even raised the question of Stalinism's impact on contemporary Soviet society. Interviewed in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette) of September 9, 1987, Academician Dmitri Likhachev, chairman of the recently established Culture Fund, compared Stalinism to serfdom, saying that it:

> Spread deep roots into the mentality of several generations . . . The fear which it instilled in our minds and souls still shackles people's consciousness and paralyzes it.

Not everyone is paralyzed. Bukharin's widow, Anna Larina, was able to conduct her campaign for his rehabilitation in the Soviet press, notably in a lengthy interview with *Ogonyok*. And more anonymous survivors, as they did after Nikita Khrushchev's denunciations of Stalin in 1956 and 1961, have flooded Soviet newspapers with letter-memoirs. *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, for example, received 10,000 in 1987, presumably similar to the plea of Valentina Gromova, which the *Washington Post* reproduced on February 10, 1988. Recounting the travails of her blind, 82-year-old husband and his 10 years in Arctic labor camps, she asked that innocent *gulag* survivors be given state pensions.

Describing Reality

Not only in viewing the past but also in reporting on the present, Soviet media are shedding the gray conformity that was long their chief characteristic, and circulation figures indicate that the reading public is rewarding the standard bearers of *glasnost*. *Pravda*, viewed as unenthusiastic for reform, lost 300,000 of its daily 1987 sales, but still circulates 10.7 million copies. *Izvestiya*, on the other hand, has published hard-hitting articles and gained 2.5 million in readership.

Among the periodicals a similar trend has appeared. Conservative journals such as *Molodaya Gvardia*, which opposed plans to publish suppressed works by the late Boris Pasternak, have kept their circulations stable. *Novy Mir* and *Znamya*, liberal literary and political monthlies, have doubled their sales to about one million and one-half million, respectively.

Druzhba Narodov — probably because of its announced plan to publish the Anatoly Rybakov novel, *Children of the Arbat*, — saw circulation rocket from 150,000 to 800,000. Subscriptions poured into *Moskva* after it decided to serialize the pre-Revolutionary work, *The History of the Russian State*.

In journalism *glasnost* has expanded content as well as readership. Taboo topics from ordinary crime to political corruption, from environmental protest to inadequate health care have become regular, if not standard, fare in the Soviet press and on Soviet television. For example, the sensitive issue of the millions of victims of Stalin's drive to collectivize agriculture from 1929 until 1933 has recently surfaced in the Soviet press. Vladimir Tikhonov, a member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, wrote in early April in the weekly *Argumenti i Fakti*, that Stalin's policy of "de-kulakiza-

tion" had liquidated the Soviet peasantry as a class with well over "10 million rural dwellers" persecuted.

DISASTERS: Since the Chernobyl nuclear power plant fire and explosion in April 1986 shattered the official myth that nuclear accidents cannot occur in the U.S.S.R., Soviet people and media have shown heightened concern for ecology and nuclear energy issues. Although it took about two weeks after the accident for officials to release data to the Soviet press on Chernobyl, the disclosure was extensive and inaugurated a new practice of discussing calamities.

In 1986, the press reported earthquakes in Moldavia, the sinking of a Soviet passenger ship in the Black Sea and a fire on a Soviet nuclear submarine which went down near Bermuda — all events which would have gone unrecorded in pre-*glasnost* times. In January 1988, the youth newspaper, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, revealed that public opposition had stopped construction of a nuclear power plant near Krasnodar. Criticizing such popular fears, the article also said the public lacked information, as evidenced by the flood of concerned citizens' letters to the Atomic Energy Ministry.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS: Crime, routinely concealed in the past, has become the subject of regular columns in Moscow's three dailies and, since 1987, of weekly press briefings at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Moscow police admit that at least 2,000 prostitutes ply their trade in the Soviet capital.[17] And *Izvestiya* reported in September 1987, the existence of 50,000 drug addicts in the U.S.S.R. — 80,000 fewer than police officials say are at large.[18]

Press freedom to discuss these social issues and others such as juvenile delinquency and alcohol-related crime has its cost. Moscow police were angry at a *Komsomolskaya Pravda* charge of their brutality to teenage motorcycle gangs, and a *Moskovsky Komsomolets* report mentioning prostitutes' earnings apparently stimulated new enrollment in the oldest profession.

The sorry state of Soviet health services has also received unaccustomed publicity. In the September 25, 1987 *Pravda*, for example, Dr. Svyatoslav Fedorov, a famous eye surgeon, said that the basic problem for the Soviet health system was getting medical personnel to work better. Interviewed by *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in April 1987, the new Minister of Health, Dr. Evgeny Chazov, revealed that the Soviet Union ranks 50th in the world in infant mortality and that pollution levels in 104 Soviet cities threaten public health.[19] And *Voprosy Ekonomiki* (Economic Questions) said in 1987, that three-fourths of the citizenry pay or bribe medical workers to get better treatment than the "free" health system routinely provides.[20]

OFFICIAL CORRUPTION: Launched by Andropov, the drive against bribe-taking and self-enrichment by Soviet officials has reached back into the Brezhnev family, east into a $6.5 billion scandal in Uzbekistan[21] and to the point that *Pravda* acknowledged that corruption had become the key to decisionmaking involving officials and entrepreneurs who hired bodyguards and bought police protection.

Long an instrument of the anti-corruption campaign, the press has even been allowed to record KGB misconduct. In one instance, it publicized the rebuke administered to the Ukrainian KGB chief, Stepan Mukha, by KGB head Viktor Chebrikov for helping to si-

lence a local, muckraking journalist. In January 1988, *Pravda* also reported how falsified evidence had been used to frame an Odessa police chief, A. V. Malyshev, and imprison him for two years, in retaliation for his drive against theft of state property by local party chiefs.

Electronic Glasnost

Although it took up the new ethos later than the print media, Soviet television has embraced it warmly and — in Gorbachev's first year in office — profited from *glasnost* concretely. As the first leader to rely heavily on TV to promote his views and programs, Gorbachev gave it priority attention. He installed Aleksandr Aksenev in December 1985 as the new head of Gostelradio, the mass media agency, which has since purchased new transmitters and other equipment and, in 1987, added four hours to the daily TV broadcast schedule.[22]

Along with these changes, Soviet television is notably less boring and more popular, improved in style and substance and even coverage of foreign news. In 1986, the amount of live programing increased [23] and in 1987 — as part of a trend that brought a record number of live interviews with Western political figures — Soviet TV ran more than 20 telebridges, exchanges of views, with various Western countries.[24] On February 8, 1988, it even gave unprecedented live coverage to the Supreme Soviet's "debate" on the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

A Moscow cab driver's comment to a Commission staffer in late 1987, that, "now at least there's something to watch on TV" is confirmed by surveys that show television as the main Soviet communications medium and find viewers spending twice as much time in front of their sets in the spring of 1987 as two years earlier.[25]

On news broadcasts they are routinely seeing reports on subjects — drug abuse, crime, runaway children, AIDS, natural disasters and accidents — that both electronic and print media used to shun. Soviet TV has even shown some public demonstrations of protest: Jewish *refuseniks* in Moscow, Lithuanian nationalists in Vilnius.

The direct link between Gorbachev's message and the Soviet electronic medium can be clearly seen in the coverage by special programs of his reform agenda. A new broadcast, shown immediately after the evening newscast, is called "Spotlight on *Perestroika*," an examination of people's responses to restructuring plans.

Another program, "Man and the Law," looks at the impact of proposed revisions in Soviet law. One show on private enterprise discussed ways and means of setting up a private business. Another successful venture, "Twelfth Floor," a monthly broadcast aimed at youth, has brought millions of viewers frank discussions between experts and young people on touchy social and psychological questions.

Limits of Glasnost

The candor, the spirit of inquiry, the new daring of the Soviet media are all reflections of the wider role public opinion is gaining in a society where a citizen's only place used to be in the audience, applauding the leadership. Opinion polls — formerly classified data

— are now frequently published, even when they show, as an unusual survey of youth did in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in September 1987, that nearly a third do not believe in communism.

Not only are readers' letters published in greater numbers and variety of conflicting viewpoints, but the national TV news broadcast, *Vremya* (Time), has shown numerous man-in-the-street interviews. A specialist at the Institute on State and Law told Helsinki Commission staffers in December 1987, that legal and practical changes are being developed to ensure individuals equitable access to the media. And public opposition is credited with getting top leaders to reverse plans to divert the flow of Siberian rivers into Central Asia, to search for new designs for a World War II monument in Moscow and to stop construction on a nuclear power plant in the north Caucasus.

If knowledge is power, sharing information has the effect of diluting central political control in a nation whose regimes have historically monopolized authority. The change makes many Soviets — both powerful and those unused to power — uncomfortable. And the change is still a relative one, not a total reversal.

Some issues are still off-limits to journalists — any criticism of Soviet foreign policy decisions, the Kremlin leadership or the Communist system in the U.S.S.R., for example. In military matters, too, secrecy remains strong. Yet an *Izvestiya* commentator, Stanislav Kondrashev, can complain publicly, as he did in the September 1987 *Kommunist*, that the lack of "necessary information about military and military-political affairs" hampers the work of Soviet journalists.[26]

Since the leadership decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, however, the press has been able to treat the war there with greater honesty. Its 1985 coverage still portrayed the conflict as basically a tale of Soviet heroics and *mujahedeen* banditry. Revealing now that Soviet troops are being killed and wounded, the press has also disclosed that many Afghans oppose the Soviet presence and that many Soviet citizens are critical of it. An outstanding example of such reporting was the series of articles by Artyom Borovik published in the liberal journal, *Ogonyok*.[27] Without directly questioning the 1979 decision to invade Afghanistan, the media are at least giving Soviet citizens a sense of the course of the war there.

Soviet authorities, however, are still screening out most information from the West. Citing hard currency shortages and promising anew (as human rights spokesman Fyodor Burlatsky did in Yugoslavia in mid-March, 1988)[28] to bring policy in line with 1975 Helsinki Accord undertakings on information exchange, they permit only the public sale of Communist Party publications. Although the Kremlin did stop jamming Voice of America broadcasts to the Soviet Union in 1987, it continues to block Radio Liberty signals. And after the massive Armenian protests over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, the April 4, 1988 *Pravda* accused Western radio stations of inciting recent ethnic unrest.[29]

And some Soviet officials openly show their distaste for current journalistic conduct at home. Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, in a January 1988 television appearance, sharply criticized the press for undermining public respect for the Red Army and called on it to instill patriotism in Soviet youth.[30]

Since his views on this subject are close to those stated by Party Secretary Yegor Ligachev and KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov, it is not surprising that Soviet journalists feel uncertain about which line to follow and which lines they may not cross. When editors met with Gorbachev at the start of this year, *Pravda* editor-in-chief Viktor Afanasyev noted: "In recent times, breaking mechanisms against press criticism have appeared." His colleague at the helm of *Ogonyok*, Vitaly Korotich, said that ideological clashes seriously impeded communication among journalists and with Soviet officials.[31] The clashes would seem an inevitable accompaniment to as abrupt a switch in as crucial an area of political power as *glasnost* is for the Soviet media, officialdom and the public. After years of near-total silence about the gap between the nation's promises and its performance, many people in the U.S.S.R. feel poisoned by a diet of bad news. Dissident Elena Bonner remarked to Helsinki Commission staffers in December 1987, that "information shock" had hit much of the public.

Reportedly, the Moscow media is playing a role in what may be an ever-widening rift between Gorbachev and his chief Kremlin rival, Yegor Ligachev. When Gorbachev was in Yugoslavia and Aleksandr Yakovlev was in Mongolia, Ligachev apparently summoned a meeting of Soviet newspaper editors to discuss party policy. (Significantly, *Moscow News* and *Ogonyok* editors were deemed too liberal to invite.) During this meeting, Ligachev praised an anti-reform article published on March 13 in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and called for restraint in the Soviet press. In late March — when Ligachev was out of Moscow — Gorbachev reportedly called a Politburo meeting which reprimanded the *Sovetskaya Rossiya* editor and warned Ligachev for his conduct at the editor's meeting.[32]

The architects of *glasnost* must hope that the shock that comes from dispelling the official myth of Soviet perfection will be a galvanizing one for reform. Their aspirations, however, ring a note reminiscent of the appeal a Russian editor in exile made to the new Czar Alexander II over 130 years ago. "Sire, give us freedom of speech," beseeched Alexander Herzen in a public letter, "We have so much to say to the world and ourselves."[33]

Like Mikhail Gorbachev, Alexander II was a reforming autocrat. Except for freeing Russia's serfs, however, his grants of freedom were largely curtailed or reversed after his assassination. It is not clear, after only three years of Gorbachev's rule, how much of his program — beginning with *glasnost* in the media — will endure even through his lifetime.

FOOTNOTES

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24. Viktor Yasmann, "Soviet Telebridges in 1987," *RL Research*, Jan. 28, 1988.
25. Isaac Tarasulo, Lecture, Kennan Institute, Jan. 7, 1987.
26. Celestine Bohlen, "Soviet Press Asks Military Cost Figures," *Washington Post*, Sept. 29, 1987.

27. David Remnick, "Soviet's Kabul Dispatches Bring Home 'the Real War'," *Washington Post*, Mar. 4, 1988.
28. David Remnick and Jackson Diehl, "Soviet Sales Seen for Western Press," *Washington Post*, Mar. 18, 1988.
29. Reuters, "West Media Incite Riots, Soviets Say," *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 6, 1988.
30. Bill Keller, "Soviet Official Says Press Harms Army," *New York Times*, Jan. 21, 1988.
31. Antero Pietila, "Soviet Press Gives Glimpse Into Clashes Over Reforms," *Baltimore Sun*, Jan. 14, 1988.
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CULTURAL POLICIES

If the advance of *glasnost* in the Soviet media has been tentative, its pace and sweep through cultural life — from films to plays, from dead poets to living novelists and even rock musicians — has been nearly revolutionary. Slower in painting, sculpture and music than in publishing, movie-making and the theater, new policies have had a dramatic impact not only on the culture Soviets display but on those who shape it.

Long-entrenched bureaucrats have been swept aside and old bureaucracies by-passed. Suppressed works have surfaced, and their creators have won rehabilitation. And the old creed — that art must present a positive view of life, a stream of praise for the state and party — has been giving way. Various trends are developing: a lively youth culture, an experimental avant-garde, anti-Western Russophilism and critical realism affiliated with Gorbachev's general views.[1]

In its first stage, however, the phenomenon is more a changing of the guard than an unleashing of fresh creative impulses. Or, as leading liberal writer, Bulat Okudzhava has said, it is a "revolution without revolutionaries." Most of the victors today in the struggle for control of the Soviet cultural establishment are artists who had been fighting (or publicly conforming) to the old rules and rulers yesterday. New and youthful talent — except in film and pop music — has yet to emerge, to be widely seen and heard.

Yet if the climate of tolerance for candor, experiment and self-expression can endure, it is possible that *glasnost* will develop — through free competition — both new voices and new audiences for Soviet culture. The early start is promising, but still, just a start.

Changing at the Top

Beginning in late 1985, with the already noted appointment of a new head of Gostelradio, the Soviet cultural bureaucracy has undergone a profound house cleaning. The Ministry of Culture — run by Politburo candidate member Petr Demichev since 1974 — got a new head, Vasily Zakharov, in September 1986. Also that month, Mikhail Nenashev, former editor of *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, took over the State Printing Committee (Goskomizdat) from long-time boss Boris Stukalin.

Aleksandr Kamshalov, former head of the Central Committee cultural department's film sector, became the director of Goskino, the film industry management agency, in December, just seven months after the Fifth Congress of Cinema Workers voted to replace director Lev Kulidzhanov with director Elem Klimov as secretary of the Union of Cinematographers. A month later — June, 1986 — the Eighth Writers' Union Congress, in a companion move, ousted veteran First Secretary Georgy Markov for Vladimir Karpov.

In October of the same year, the delegates to the 15th Congress of the venerable All-Russian Theatrical Society (founded in 1883) voted to dissolve their organization after Moscow Art Theater Director Oleg Yefremov urged forming a new union to protect theaters from arbitrary decisions by censors and bureaucrats.[2] As a result, two new theater organizations came into being: the U.S.S.R. Theatrical Workers Union, headed by actor Kiril Lavrov, and an affiliate for the Russian Federation, with actor Mikhail Ulyanov as its chief.

A fierce fight inside the Artists' Union ended in January 1988 with a temporary compromise: the election of 63-year-old Andrei Vasnetsov by the Congress of Soviet Artists as chairman of the union's board. Vasnetsov had been in the avant-garde 30 years ago, but kow-towed to Nikita Khrushchev's criticism of modern art with a public admission of error in 1962.[3]

Only musical officialdom has escaped the upheaval. Despite fiery speeches against his policies, composer Tikhon Khrennikov, union head since 1948, held onto his post through the Seventh Congress of the Union of Composers in April 1986. Eleven months later, however, *Izvestiya* carried a polemic by composer Vladimir Dashkevich, decrying stagnation in the Union.[4] The fight is not over.

And Culture Minister Zakharov may well be right that:

> Revolutions of Soviet society is particularly manifest in culture. We have revised the concepts of administrative guidance . . . to make once-subservient cultural organizations full-fledged participants in the cultural process, with rights previously the sole domain of government . . . We have abandoned the old policy of bans . . . What matters is artistic merit. Plays, stories and films previously banned for political considerations are now being made public.[5]

The reorganization, for example, has given the Union of Cinematographers a share of the power Goskino once monopolized over film production, from ideology to finance. Even more importantly, the film studios themselves have been put on a make-or-break self-financing basis, requiring them to succeed at the box office — not just with cultural apparatchiks — or go bankrupt.[6]

No longer, Givi Dvalishvili, deputy director of the Georgian union, told Commission staffers, must scripts await final approval from Goskino in Moscow. Each studio's "creative group" decides what to shoot, with only pornography, war propaganda and extreme cruelty or violence barred *a priori*.

In a related experiment with autonomy, 80 theaters have gained exemption from Culture Ministry review and approval of the plays they want to rehearse and produce.[7] And with audience taste taking a greater role in setting theatrical fare, government subsidies are to be trimmed without, however, requiring theaters to be totally self-supporting. As a result, ticket prices will rise from a maximum of 3 rubles to a minimum of 30.[8]

Profiting from Rehabilitation

To win audiences even at higher costs, publishers, film makers and others are finding that their most lucrative properties are often not fresh creations but casualties of earlier censorship.

Rehabilitation has been a constant in Soviet culture; composer Dmitri Shostakovich experienced it in his own lifetime. But with revaluation of Soviet history the most important single theme to

emerge from *glasnost* so far, resurrection of films condemned to the shelves and writings consigned to the authors' desk drawers has been a cultural growth industry. As a young Soviet Socialist, Boris Kagarlitsky wrote:

> It is significant that what most excited the (Soviet) public in the mid-eighties were not new works, but old ones that had been suppressed in an earlier period.[9]

FILM: In fact an early sign of the cultural thaw was the 1985 release of Elem Klimov's film, *Agony*, produced ten years earlier but hidden away, *Newsweek's* then-Moscow correspondent was told, because Leonid Brezhnev viewed the sympathetic portrait of Czar Nicholas II and casually remarked, "who needs this movie?" After its release, three other films rescued from the censors — German's *Road Test*, Panfilov's *Topic* and Abuladze's *Repentance* — proved the biggest box office draws of the 1985-87 period.[10] By late 1987, a Cinematographers' Union official disclosed that a total of 30 feature films and another 70 documentaries — blocked by previous censorship, some for as long as 20 years — had been cleared for at least limited screenings.[11]

Repentance, the hugely popular Georgian film directed by Tengiz Abuladze, is an example of both the workings and the content of *glasnost*. Made in 1984, it was only released in 1986 after intervention by the Georgian Party's then First Secretary, Eduard Shevardnadze, now Soviet Foreign Minister. A surrealist but scathing view of Stalin, his victims and Stalinism's legacy of moral and intellectual dishonesty, *Repentance* drew 3 million viewers in the Moscow area alone during six spring weeks in 1987.[12]

Another popular film, *It's Not Easy To Be Young*, directed by Latvian Juris Podnieks, also saw the light of day thanks to another Politburo member — Yegor Ligachev. Initial reaction in 1986 to the youth-oriented film censured its makers for not showing "typical" young people. But after Ligachev was invited to see it, the film was released immediately — and drew 9 million viewers in five months.[13]

PUBLISHING: In literature, as well, resurrected authors turn into best-sellers, not an insignificant consideration for publishers who must this year become self-financing, responsible for up to half of their losses. Merit as well as money, of course, leads the journal *Novy Mir* to print Boris Pasternak's long-banned *Dr. Zhivago*.

Similar considerations spur others to publish once-forbidden classics by poets such as Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev, who was executed by the Soviets in 1921. Less renowned in the West, other important Soviet authors have escaped from long silence, especially when — and because — their writings dealt with Stalin or other controversies in Soviet history. Thus, the last installment of Sergei Zalygin's long novel, *After the Storm*, on Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), appeared in 1985, and the late Aleksandr Bek's fiction, *The New Appointment*, on Stalin's Ministry of Steel Production, ran in *Znamya* in 1986.

The magazine *Druzhba Narodov* scored in 1987 with an account of the arrest and exile of innocents in 1934 (Anatoly Rybakov's *Children of the Arbat*); Yuri Trifonov's *The Disappearance* about the Terror and some of Varlaam Shalamov's *Kolyma Poems*, stories about the Siberian prison camps that had long been underground

classics. Even the conservative journal, *Oktyabr*, found space to serialize Vassily Grossman's epic *Life and Fate*, which openly compares Stalinism and Fascism.[14]

Yet a further breakthrough is publication of Russian emigres, condemned in the past to oblivion. Vladimir Nabokov, Georgy Ivanov and Evgeny Zamyatin (whose anti-utopian 1920 novel, *We*, is to be printed in 1988) are among those being posthumously honored. Of the living emigres, however, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Lev Kopelev, Vladimir Voinovich and Georgy Ivanov head the list of the still unmentionable and unprintable.

Novy Mir, in contrast, has announced plans to print poetry by 1987 Nobel Laureate Joseph Brodsky, and the humor magazine, *Krokodil*, has already excerpted Vassily Aksyonov's memoir, *In Search of Melancholy Baby*, including these surprising lines:

> I perceive with greater clarity that totalitarian decadence must be (and is now in the process of being) outweighed by the forces of liberalism and benevolent inequality. And I thank God that the leader of those forces is a powerful America.[15]

THEATER: The best-known beneficiary of *glasnost* on stage is surely playwright Mikhail Shatrov, now 55, a trained engineer who uses drama to air his views and to vent a hatred for Stalin going back to the death of Shatrov's father and uncle in the purges.

With five of his plays in the 1988 repertory at Moscow theaters, Shatrov is having his message — "Stalin is not Lenin's heir" — widely heard. Published in *Znamya* before its production, *Further . . . Further . . . Further* is "a work jammed with suppressed details of Soviet history," an American reporter wrote, "that has made the playwright the talk of the town — but not for the first time."[16]

During the 27th Party Congress, for instance, the Moscow Art Theater, once Stanislavsky's home and now the domain of director Oleg Yefremov, staged Shatrov's *Silver Wedding Anniversary*, one of a number of dramas that attack party corruption, bureaucratic bungling and venality. His drama, *The Brest Peace*, written in 1962, not only portrays Trotsky and Bukharin but also draws parallels between Lenin's expedient decision to make peace with the enemy and Gorbachev's arms control initiatives 70 years later.

Such comments earn Shatrov criticism on two conflicting counts: that he reveres Lenin to excess or, as the head of *Pravda's* cultural department complained in January 1988, that his plays show a failure to understand Marxist historical laws.[17]

Innovating With Words and Music

Although revival and retrospection have been the chief features of *glasnost* in culture since 1985, experiment has been encouraged as well. In music, rock is becoming almost respectable and international collaboration is expanding. But on stage and screen, as well, new voices with new messages are getting through to Soviet audiences.

In literature, however, at least one talented new voice remains outside the establishment. The Writers' Union in early 1988 rejected the membership application of Tatiana Tolstoya, a popular short story writer whose work often appears in *Novy Mir*. Some have seen this rejection — reversed in May — as a sign of the Russo-

philes' increasing strength in the important Writers' Union. As David Remnick noted in a recent article, "the official literary world is still dominated by what is occasionally referred to as the 'fascist mafia'" — editors of reactionary magazines and the "Russian Party."[18]

FILM AND THEATER: Two documentaries — one a fresh look at history (*More Light*, released in 1987) and the other a Latvian inquiry into contemporary youth (*Is It Easy to Be Young?*) have both proved popular. The first focuses on Soviet leaders, including such Stalin victims as Trotsky, Bukharin and Lev Kamenev, and links Lenin's NEP to Gorbachev's reforms. Liberal historian Yuri Afanasev, however, complains that it blames only the men at the top, not society below, for Soviet ills.[19] The Latvian film, on the other hand, talks to real youngsters about real problems: alcohol and drug addiction, alienated Afghanistan veterans. Without seeking to theorize, it sends a bleak message about apathy and disaffection in the coming generation.

Another popular film, *Plyumbum, or a Dangerous Game*, might be called a docudrama exposé on the life of young Stalin era "saint" Pavlik Morozov, 13, who denounced his father as a *kulak* and was later murdered by local farmers. This film, seen by 20 million people in 1987 and early 1988, debunks the heroic Morozov myth.[20]

Glasnost has also brought some experimental theater to Soviet stages, including Lithuanian director Eimuntas Nekrosius, 35, and his staging of Chingiz Aitmatov's *A Day Lasts More than One Thousand Years*. Its heavy reliance on mime and gesture in the performance by the Vilnius Youth Theater was such a success that Moscow police had to control the crowds of ticket-seekers outside the Sovremennik Theater.[21] Innovation in Leningrad in 1988 brought Aleksandr Galin's play on prostitution, *Stars in the Morning Sky*, to the Maly Theater and its noted director, Lev Dudin. The theme had been a forbidden one, but what made audiences gasp were the unprecedented steamy, nearly nude sex scenes.

CLASSICAL MUSIC: Far more staid, the Soviet concert hall is only beginning to admit new sounds, and Soviet music arbiters have not yet dropped the control they exercise over performers through the "Artist's Certificate" that lists the musician's permitted repertoire before Soviet audiences.

Nevertheless, official Soviet attitudes towards contemporary classical music seem to have improved. One leading Soviet composer, Sofia Gubaidulina, discussed the effect of *glasnost* on the Moscow classical music scene:

> It is an extraordinary event in the country . . . I think that now in Moscow we have a situation in which we are starting to hear more new music, and to promote creative achievement by composers.
>
> New art in general has been lacking, but in Moscow there is a hunger for new music . . . It doesn't have to be avant-garde, it has to meet spiritual needs.[22]

Today, the three most prominent Soviet composers are generally acknowledged to be Alfred Schnittke, Edison Denisov, and Sofia Gubaidulina, who have recently been allowed more contacts with Western musicians. Ms. Gubaidulina, for example, was allowed to travel to the West seven times since August 1986 — when she made her first trip abroad at the age of 56.

Glasnost has had another effect on Soviet music. In a recording-history first, the Soviet Government allowed an American team to come to the U.S.S.R. in 1987 and record a Soviet orchestra. American Lawrence Leighton Smith and Russian Dmitri Kitayenko conducted the Moscow Philharmonic. The three Sheffield Lab compact discs, called "The Moscow Sessions," feature Smith conducting Russian music and Kitayenko conducting American music.[23]

FOLK AND JAZZ: Russian musical culture has a long tradition of balladeers, including Aleksandr Galich and Vladimir Vysotsky, loved by Soviet listeners but barely recognized by the powers-that-be. Galich emigrated in 1974 and died in France in 1981. Vysotsky died of alcoholism in 1980 at the age of 42; his unpublicized funeral in Moscow drew 30,000 mourners.

By 1988, however, official nonrecognition for Vysotsky had turned to acclaim, almost idolatry. His songs were Melodiya best sellers. A TV program and a film chronicled Vysotsky's life. To mark his 50th birthday in January 1988, 12,000 attended a sold-out commemorative concert.

> The orgy of Vysotsky mania, reported an American journalist, is daily taking on new forms. School children are being assigned to study his poetry, monuments to him are sprouting up all over the country, and for three nights running, millions of television viewers have watched a film of his life and works.[24]

Popular and official Soviet attitudes towards jazz have also changed. Sometimes considered a product of the "decadent West," other times seen as the "cry of oppressed American blacks," today jazz has enough Soviet Government approval that some of the roughly 170 jazz musicians and ensembles are allowed to tour the United States. Among the perennial winners of an annual critics' poll, the Ganelin Trio from Lithuania had a successful U.S. tour in 1986.

ROCK MUSIC: Until shortly before Gorbachev came to power, rock music was officially scorned as a decadent Western product which lured Soviet youth from Socialist values. The Komsomol went so far as to post bans forbidding the playing of 73 Western and 37 Soviet groups at discos or other places under its control.

As in the West, Soviet rockers represent broader social protest, all the more unwelcome in the Soviet Union.

> Rock groups are persecuted, Boris Kagarlitsky observed, first and foremost not for their music but for their "striving to get away from ordinary forms of life, their fear of sinking into philistinism," their "rebellious tendency," their protest against social injustice.[25]

By late 1985, official attitudes could be seen to be changing with the announcement by Valery Sukhorado, Melodiya Records general manager, that a double record, "The Beatles' Best Songs," would be released in early 1986.[26] *Leningradskaya Pravda*, in January 1986, proudly described a Leningrad rock club which "brings together" 40 amateur rock clubs and almost 500 rock fans in the Inter-Union House of Amateur Art. This official club organized seminars, concerts — with 50 in 1985 alone — and an annual three-day rock competition.

Indeed, the Leningrad Rock Club set up in 1981 was the first to bring rock out of the Soviet underground. After a similar organization, the Moscow Rock Laboratory, appeared in 1985, other clubs sprang up all over the country.

Recognizing that youth had become alienated from the Soviet establishment, the Komsomol seized on rock concerts and discos to win back adherents to its officially organized program. Rock gained further ground with the popular success of a concert in the summer of 1986, organized by Moscow rock critic Art Troitsky and singer Alla Pugacheva, to benefit the victims of Chernobyl.[27]

Since then, rock music has proliferated on radio and TV, on concerts and in film, and can be heard daily and nightly in Moscow. Well-known rock composer Boris Grebenshchikov says, "Since the end of October (1986) we've been playing absolutely what we want — nobody stopped us, nobody asked us."[28]

This new acceptability poses problems for many Soviet rock musicians. Grebenshchikov, of the group *Aquarium*, ironically calls himself, "the darling of *glasnost.*" He explains: "We are so official now, so taken to heart, that the people who were with us before are not sure of us. Nobody can believe that the system has changed. They think we must have changed."[29]

But it may be that incentives in the Soviet music world have changed. After the success of a Western record in 1987, "Red Wave," a sampler of work by *Aquarium*, *Kino*, *Alisa* and *Strange Games*, Melodiya seems to have realized that selling Soviet rock abroad could be a source of much-needed hard currency. Indeed, Melodiya was so eager to break into this market, that it pressed a disc from a pirated tape of *Aquarium*. The first 200,000 copies of this Melodiya record— priced at 2.50 roubles — sold out in hours; it will eventually reach the million mark. Yet Melodiya paid no royalties to *Aquarium*, since the group is still not officially recognized; nor did it even give them a copy of the record. Melodiya's new interest in rock, observed Leningrad rock critic Aleksandr Kan, "is a breakthrough. Still, every song, every sound, every record, has to be approved . . . (I)t is being done exclusively on their terms."[30]

Those terms include restructuring of the Soviet rock scene announced in mid-1987 and dividing rock musicians into two new categories: the formerly "official" groups, now called "professionals," with the Rock Club as their union, and former underground bands, called "amateurs," now organized in the Rock Laboratory. Theoretically rock groups need an invitation to join the Rock Laboratory, but so far such invitations have been almost universal.

After October 1987, these two categories will be allowed to advertise their concerts and to earn 9 rubles per band per performance. (Amateur concerts must include two bands.) The two unions are already in competition; the professionals are trying to renegotiate their pay scale with the cultural ministries. At this point, it is still unclear how a band moves from amateur to professional status. Most rockers, however, seem happy with the new arrangement.[31] In any case, this official two-tier union structure for Soviet rockers shows Soviet authorities' desire to make rock musicians part of the establishment — if not of the state.

Ending Art's Isolation

Although fewer Soviet artists lost their lives during Stalin's terror than other cultural figures, the heavy hand of Socialist realism has kept a tighter stranglehold on Soviet art than on other

spheres of culture, isolating it almost completely from Western art of the 20th century. With only one modern art museum in the Soviet Union — in Armenia — Soviet art is also cutoff from its own extensive avant-garde tradition of the 1920's. Until very recently, nonconformist artists of later generations were ignored or persecuted and their works suppressed in the Soviet Union.

Harbingers of *glasnost*, however, have been exhibits of Soviet avant-garde works by Kazimir Malevich, Marc Chagall, Vasily Kandinsky, Lyubov Popova, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Pavel Filonov, Vladimir Tatlin, Natalya Goncharova, Mikhail Larionov, and Aristarkh Lentulov. Until 1986, their art was locked away in special Soviet archives.

The dual structure of the official art establishment includes the Union of Artists and the U.S.S.R. Academy of Arts. Art historian, Daniil Dondurei writing in 1987 in *Literaturnaya Gazeta (10)*, described this system as "unprecedented in world practice." Soviet artists "decide themselves what to produce, they evaluate the quality of their product, set its price, decide to whom and how to sell their pictures and, finally, they buy their best work from themselves." Soviet artists sell their work to art foundations which are run by the republic and national Union of Artists.) Dondurei also disclosed that there are 115,000 paintings, sculptures, and graphic works — acquired at a total of 60 million rubles — in Union of Artists closed depositories.[32]

Reports of recent Union of Artists sessions are filled with details of financial scandals — not surprising, given the stakes — such as competition among members for commissions, access to foreign travel, etc.[33] At a recent Congress, *Sovetskaya Kultura* reported, May 21, 1987, the First Secretary of the RSFSR Union of Artists, Valentin Sidorov, accused some union workshops heads of abuse of official positions. Soviet media have also sharply attacked recent exhibits organized by the Academy of Arts and the Union of Artists. Critics point out that although Leniniana no longer appeals, it is still such a strong presence at these shows that the public stays away in droves. In contrast, as Dondurei reported, people waited for hours to get into the 17th Exhibition of Young Moscow Artists and to a December 1986 show of 67 avant-garde artists in the Moscow branch of the RSFSR Union. Apparently, official Soviet artists consider such much-attended exhibits to be "scandalous."

Nonetheless, the Soviet decision to hold its first international art auction in July 1988, also recognized the popularity of the unofficial artists. To be held in Moscow, the auction will include about 100 paintings by some 20 Soviet artists, among them Ilya Kabakov, Ivan Tshuikov and Vadim Zakharov.[34] Summing up the Soviet art scene, a Soviet Culture Ministry official acknowledged:

> (It is only in the last few years with the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika* that artists of all tendencies and styles have had greater opportunities to exhibit and export their works openly.[35]

Judging Progress

As with media policies, proponents and opponents of change in culture are still deep in debate. In some fields, such as art and music, *glasnost* has a long way to go. In other spheres, such as the-

ater and film, it has already had a major impact and is changing the face of Soviet literature.

Since *glasnost* and culture are both constantly changing, a final verdict on what it will do for the variety and authenticity of Soviet culture would be premature. William Fisher, a media critic, however, provides a convincing interim verdict at least on glasnost in popular culture:

> As the restraints on expression are lifted by decree, the infrastructure below begins to shift of its own accord. Whether the authorities' real goal for culture is genuine openness or just good publicity, their new policies are likely to lead to developments beyond their direct control.[36]

FOOTNOTES

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AFTERWORD

THE MEANING OF GORBACHEV'S REFORMS

YURI F. ORLOV

The Context of the Reforms

While *glasnost* and *perestroika* have brought several positive changes to the Soviet Union, two important things have not changed under Gorbachev. The first is the basic strategic aim of the Soviet Communist Party leadership: worldwide extension of the party's influence. (It is worth remembering that expansionist geopolitical aims are not special to the Soviet Union or to the Soviet system. The Soviets are going through a disease that all of the major European powers have gone through.)

The current reforms represent not a change of *basic strategy* but of *tactics*. Many officials at the top of the Soviet hierarchy have apparently recognized that they cannot achieve their geopolitical aims without improving the current Soviet model of socialism and the Soviet image abroad.

The second thing that has not changed under Gorbachev is the source of major decisions about basic strategy and tactics: the Politburo, and the chiefs of the KGB and army. Gorbachev has inspired sympathy and support in the West as an embattled, independent figure whose power to reform society is precarious. But this dramatic and romantic image of him is a fantasy, an image of a Western leader. From the beginning, Gorbachev's position inside the Soviet leadership has in fact been strong, not precarious, because he has been implementing a policy decision whose broad lines were drawn by the very top of the Soviet hierarchy.

That policy of reform has strong support in key sectors of power and influence in Soviet society, because it speaks to things they want: the KGB, a bureaucracy purged of corruption and lack of productivity; the military, advanced technology and efficient agriculture; the technological elite, technological development as a high national priority; and the intelligentsia, some freedom of expression. It is the workers whose support is weak, because the policy does nothing for them; a rise in their standard of living is not even one of its direct goals.

Thus, the contradictions in statements made by Gorbachev and Chebrikov, or Gorbachev and Ligachev should not be taken seriously as signs that Gorbachev's position is unstable. These are in fact, Gorbachev's men; that they have conservative views and can voice them in public simply means that Gorbachev wants to preserve conservative elements in the party.

Gorbachev's reforms need to be seen in the above context — a context unlikely to change in the foreseeable future — if one is ac-

curately to gauge the motives for them, their inherent limits, and the possibilities of further reforms.

The Motives for the Reforms

The reforms under Gorbachev aim to overcome the slow but steady degeneration of the Soviet system, which created a crisis for the Soviet leadership less because it endangered the system itself than because it endangered their geopolitical strategy. For their strategy rested on the belief that the Soviet system was, in all key respects, better than any other. The belief was severely challenged when they compared the degenerating Soviet system with the West. It was the *contrast with the West* that forced the leadership to see that a change of tactics was needed to protect and promote their strategy -- a change that was difficult and even revolutionary from their standpoint.

What symptoms of degeneration led to this change? The list is well known: A growing technology gap between the West and the U.S.S.R. Chronic economic stagnation and agricultural problems. Corruption and drunkenness. Incompetence and irresponsibility.

Other reasons for reform have been:

* — the declining international prestige of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet Union;
* — the growing critical outlook of the Soviet intelligentsia, prestige of dissident critics among them, and sympathy of Western intellectuals for repressed Soviet dissidents;
* — Eastern Europe's continuing aversion to the Soviet model of socialism;
* — the resistance of the Polish workers;
* — the unexpected and continuing struggle of the Afghan people; and
* — the impossibility, in modern conditions, of cutting off the flow of information to the West about the nature of the Soviet regime and its human rights violations.

The Limits of the Reforms

The bounds of the current reforms are consistent with these motives for reform. They are defined pretty much by the party's interest in controlling key sectors of society, its historical self-legitimation as creator of a unique system opposed to Western society and the internationalist ideology necessary for world hegemony.

Thus, there are some things we simply cannot expect. We cannot expect Soviet leaders to exchange their party goals for Russian nationalist ones. Nor — as Gorbachev himself keeps reminding us — can we expect substantial modification of the Soviet system in the direction of Western-style democracy (a genuine multi-party system, for example).

Gorbachev, himself a prime example of a party technocrat, has accelerated a transition from rule by a pure party *bureaucracy* to rule by a *technocracy* composed of both party functionaries and people close to the party. This shift is indeed a positive one, but must be recognized as having been made in the interests of efficiency, not democracy, and as being very far from a structural change in the system. What we *can* expect is that the limited freedom of action granted to economic managers is an improvement that will

be limited in effect, unable to produce the results the leadership aims at.

For example, removing the food deficit and the notorious inefficiency of both agriculture and industry requires more than the half-measures currently proposed under *perestroika*. It requires a virtual renunciation of party control over the economy and a significant expansion of the scope and influence of the free market. But this is something the Soviet Communist Party has always feared, and continues to fear, for obvious reasons. Furthermore, an industry in which individual managers were truly their own masters would seem to require — as Western experience shows — giving independence to the trade unions, in order to protect workers from arbitrary management decisions. But, again, doing so would entail renunciation of party control over a key sector of the economy.

The case of *glasnost* — for which many dissidents struggled for many years — is somewhat mixed. It is a reform aimed at both substance and image. The Soviet leadership genuinely wants and badly needs criticism of bureaucracy and new ideas for the system. As a way of providing that, the policy of *glasnost* has certainly been effective — but undoubtedly more than they bargained for.

An obvious limit of *glasnost* is that offering such criticism and ideas even now requires courage. The men and women testing *glasnost* in human rights and independent peace organizations know that people just like them have been in labor camps, prisons, psychiatric hospitals, places of internal exile, and that *even under Gorbachev, a significant number of them remain there.* Moreover, these men and women have been variously experiencing administrative harassment, detention, firings, beatings and threats of worse. Nevertheless, to my knowledge, in the last several months almost none has been brought to trial and almost no one brought to trial has been condemned. This is certainly a positive development. Whether it will persist remains to be seen.

Under such conditions, *glasnost* has inherent limits as a tactic for improving the image of the Soviet regime. For the courage of people willing to put *glasnost* to a prominent test under such conditions is the courage of people whom it will be difficult if not impossible to silence. They will persist in speaking out. They will also persist in sending information independently to the West — one of the very things for which such people are persecuted by the Soviet authorities.

Their high prestige and influential contacts in the West mean that their information finds an audience and their safety is closely monitored abroad. If they remain relatively unharmed, this fact itself will enhance the image of the regime — but their information and critical statements certainly will not. If they are harmed, that image will be harmed unequivocally.

The Possibilities of Further Reforms

Any positive changes in the Soviet Union are reversible, of course, so long as the KGB continues to exist, and Gorbachev certainly intends to preserve that organization. So, on one hand, it is difficult to consider even the current limited reforms truly permanent in character. On the other hand, severe difficulties like the

technology gap between the Soviet Union and the West are facts of life that may force the Soviet Communist Party to retreat at some point, redefining Soviet socialism with every retreat. Each concession will open new battlegrounds where individuals and groups in the Soviet Union may have a positive influence through their fight for substantive reforms in human rights and other areas.

Moreover, there is the activity of an increasing number of Soviet citizens gradually engaging in criticism of the current system, joining organizations independent of the party, and wishing to go further than the limits set by the party. This itself creates an atmosphere of pressure in favor of maintaining and possibly even expanding the current reforms.

No matter how you look at it, Soviet society *is* entering a new stage — a stage in which internal criticism, *if supported by international pressure,* could lead to a not insignificant humanizing of Soviet society within the foreseeable future. For Soviet leaders are now engaged in a colossal effort to spread the image of a new, more civilized, humane, liberal country. Their desire that the West accept the image and, also, cooperate with them in such areas as technological and agricultural development, offers the West an historic opportunity to help that image be given more genuine substance.

It is in the interests of the international community, not simply of the Soviet people, that the West exercise its current leverage, because the more humane and liberal the Soviet Union emerges from its current crisis, the less dangerous will be its geopolitical ambitions and the safer the world will therefore be.

So the most constructive thing to do during this period of change in the Soviet Union is not, as some in the West think, simply to sit back and encouragingly applaud Gorbachev's words and reforms. The applause needs to be combined with pressure on the Soviet leader to back their liberal words with more action and to expand their reforms in accordance with the international human rights agreements they themselves have signed.

The force and timing of Western pressure on the Soviet Union in the area of human rights need to take into account the nature of recent official Soviet human rights initiatives. As a result of Western publicity and pressure about their human rights performance, the Soviets now accept human rights as an issue for international discussion. However, they seek to control how it is defined and who discusses the Soviet side of it in the international arena.

Thus, for example, at the recent summit between Gorbachev and Reagan, Gorbachev tried to reduce the issue of Soviet violations of human rights to a matter of differences in American-Soviet cross-cultural semantics. And there is, of course, the recent birth of the Soviet Human Rights Commission. This highly-publicized, semi-official body has been initiating discussions and meetings with independent international human rights groups, even as the Soviet authorities have been continuing to harass the genuinely independent human rights groups and activists in the Soviet Union. That a leading activist, Lev Timofeyev, spoke at a recent Moscow meeting between the Commission and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, was entirely due to a series of bold and clever maneuvers by Helsinki Federation members.

The Soviets evidently treat the human rights issue as a tactical game. The Helsinki Federation maneuvers in Moscow show that it is important for the West to play this very serious game — and play it well.

Pressure points in the area of human rights that offer the strongest prospect of genuine reforms in the near future are the release of all political prisoners and elimination of all political articles in the Criminal Code. These are gains that can *realistically* be achieved through internal and international pressure for a genuine *glasnost*. It will certainly help world peace when Soviet citizens can, without fear of punishment, criticize the military activities of their government, or engage in peace movements independent of government-controlled organizations.

A more distant but *also realistic* prospect of reform is offered by the Soviet policy of closed borders. Open borders in the Western sense — free entry into and exit from the country — are essential for establishing mutual confidence between people inside and outside the Soviet Union, and any increase in such confidence means an increase in international security. The "new thinking" of the Gorbachev regime on this question differs not so much from the former, police-state practice. But international pressure backing internal pressure for more open borders can, I think, be immensely constructive. It can help compel Soviet leaders to face the contradiction of simultaneously pursuing policies of both isolationism and world hegemony.

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